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Old Grizzly In The Rockies.

By Col. Prentiss Ingraham.



Old Grizzly in the Rockies;

OR,

BRUIN ADAMS,

THE BOY RANGER.

BY COLONEL PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "ADVENTURES OF BUFFALO BILL,"
"ADVENTURES OF WILD BILL," "TEXAS
JACK," ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE BOY MAIL-RIDER.

BACK from the shores of Seneca Lake, in the Empire State, still stands an old farm-house, which to-day is pointed out as the birthplace of two men who have made themselves famous in the border history of their country, among such heroes as Kit Carson, Buffalo Bill, Davy Crockett and a score of others of that ilk, about whose daring adventures, in the wild forests and upon the trackless plains, stories will be written and read for centuries to come, filling the hearts of American youths with admiration of the brave bordermen who lived in the times when the Indians were on the war-path and the great West was only known to the hardy pioneer, the invaluable scout and the soldier.

The two to whom I refer are known as Grizzly Adams, more commonly called "Old Grizzly," and his nephew, who won the appellation, and deservedly, of Bruin Adams.

Old Grizzly followed the "Star of Empire" westward as soon as the country began to get "thickly settled," as he called it, though the nearest neighbor was two miles distant; but he loved the solitude of the forest, and his rifle and his dog were the only companions he coveted.

Hence he bade farewell to the old folks at home and turned his face toward the setting sun, continuing onward and onward, until at last he reached the vast solitudes of the Rocky Mountains, where he made his abiding-place, and was content to hunt, fish and trap the live-long day.

His brother remained at the paternal home, married a farmer's daughter, and J. F. C. Adams, afterward known as "Bruin," was the result of this union.

As the boy grew in years he listened to the tales of wild adventure that came back from the West regarding his uncle, and oh! how he did long to emulate his example and win a name as a famous Indian-fighter and hunter of the wild mountains beyond the pale of civilization.

Ere he was twelve years of age he had gone

over all the hunting scenes around the lake his uncle had loved so well, had camped alone many a night in the dense forests, and caused his parents to fear that he, too, would "go West" as soon as he became older.

A perfect rider and a dead shot, even though not in his teens, he carried off many a prize at the shooting matches and races, and loving his pony and rifle more than his books, he was selected by his father to ride a lonely mail-route of thirty miles, for he could not keep the boy at school and did not care to have him continually camping in the forests, alarming all at home regarding him.

Young Adams readily consented to become "mail-rider," as the road would carry him through his best hunting-grounds and give him ample opportunity to kill game as he went along, and also he was fond of riding, felt that he could be earning a little money, and greatly enjoyed the importance of his position.

His father fitted him out with two good horses, one of which was to be kept at the other end of his ride, and the other at home.

His duties consisted in leaving home at dawn one morning, going to the village several miles away and getting the mail saddle-bags, and starting upon his ride of thirty miles, which he was expected to make between sunrise and sunset.

The next morning, mounted upon his other horse, he was to return to the starting point.

Anxious to be fully prepared against any danger he might have to face, the youth had purchased a double-barrel pistol and fine hunting-knife, and carried these in his belt in addition to his rifle slung at his back.

He had also a couple of stout blankets rolled up behind his saddle, a piece of painted canvas, with a hole in the center to slip his head through, which protected him from the rain, and a bag of provisions, with matches, which his thoughtful mother provided him with, in case he should have to camp out, as was sometimes the case in a blinding snow storm, or when the other mail-riders came in hours behind time, and he could not start before afternoon.

But no matter how late he got his mail, Jimmy Adams always started upon his ride, to go as far as possible before dark, camp if the night was bad, and continue on if pleasant.

By his pluck and determination in this he got the name at both ends of the route as a boy who was not afraid of the hoot of an owl, hard work, or a drenching by rain, and who would one day make his mark in the world, for few men cared to take that dismal ride alone, there being but two farm-houses along the way, and carrying, too, valuable letters frequently, that would tempt desperadoes to murder and robbery.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAIL-ROBBERS.

It was on one of his trips out from the home station, that young Adams met with an adventure that made him famous throughout the country where he lived.

There was no postal-order system in those days, and people frequently sent money in the letters, and the mail-riders had to often halt before the muzzle of a rifle or pistol, and see Uncle Sam's letters opened before their eyes and robbed of their pecuniary contents.

As several robberies of the kind had been perpetrated lately not far from young Adams's route, he was asked at the village one day, while waiting for his saddle-bags, what he would do if the robbers halted him.

"Oh! I don't know until it happens.

"I might run, and then I mightn't," was his cautious reply.

Which he really did do the villagers soon had an opportunity of finding out, for one afternoon, when Jimmy was starting late for his long ride, the mail from the southern districts coming hours behind time, he was told by the postmaster in a whisper that several letters were valuable and to be very careful on the way.

The boy promised and started on the way.

It was near sunset when he turned off through a path, his uncle, Old Grizzly, had made years before, and which cut off a couple of miles, as the main road made a circuit around the bend of a creek.

Just as he arrived at the creek suddenly out from behind large trees stepped two men.

At a glance the boy saw that they were not dressed in the common homespun of the farmers.

That their intentions were hostile he also could see, for they each held a pistol, and their manner was threatening.

Unfortunately just behind the boy was a fallen tree, which he had had to ride around to go down to the creek crossing, which was just before him.

The bank of the creek was high and precipitous, and upon either side of the gap, leading to the water, stood the two men, and their position was such that they headed him off too from retreating around either end of the fallen tree.

"Sonny, has you got a letter for us?" asked one of the men with a sinister smile.

"No."

"You'd better look over the letters, for you might have."

"I am not the postmaster, but the mail-rider, and if I had a dozen for you, I couldn't give them to you, so let me pass, please," and the boy spoke firmly.

"Not until we have had our letters, so give us the key of the bags."

"I haven't got it."

"Then a knife will do as well. Come, Herndon, let us get those letters and stand no more trifling," said one of the men.

"Better put a bullet in the boy, too, so he'll never be able to recognize us," remarked the second man in a low tone.

"Gents, Uncle Sam wants me to carry his mail through, and I'm going to do it, so git!"

As he spoke the boy suddenly drew out his double-barrel pistol.

The act caused one man to fire quickly, and the bullet grazed the boy's cheek, drawing blood; but his shot was a dead center one and the man fell, shot through the head.

His companion also drew trigger on the youth, but the cap snapped, and as the young rider fired his second shot his horse sprung into the air and destroyed his aim.

But the man seemed now to wish only for flight, the death of his comrade having demoralized him, and he sprung over the creek bank into the water, just as the brave boy caught sight of two horses hitched far down the stream.

Instantly he put spurs to his pony and rode to them at full speed, and dismounting, unhitched them, and with the reins in his hand lead them back into the woods.

Then reloading his pistol he returned slowly toward the crossing, and saw where the man had left the water and run down the other bank, evidently intending to recover and gain his horse, and either pursue the youth or seek safety in flight.

Hastily crossing, as well as he could, with his led horses, the daring young mail-rider rode on a trot, and shortly after dark arrived at one of the two farm-houses he had to pass upon his ride.

He told the farmer what had occurred, turned the horses over to him, and while he and his sons started in pursuit of the mail-robber, the boy rode on and safely arrived at his destination.

The next morning early, when he started upon his return, two-score of horsemen accompanied him to the scene of the attack, and there met the farmer and his sons with the second robber standing by the body of the one the boy mail-carrier had slain.

"We caught him about six miles back," said the farmer.

Then the secret came out that one of the robbers, and the one which Jimmy had killed, was the son of a wealthy farmer living some forty miles away, who, having lost money by gambling, and knowing that his father expected a valuable package by mail, intended to rob the boy-rider of it, and had taken with him an accomplice, a young man as evil as himself.

The accomplice was tried and sent to State

prison, and the old farmer, refusing to even receive the body of his son, it was buried where it fell, and when Adams was caught on his rides by night, he used to say he preferred riding round the road than taking the short-cut through and passing the grave of the man he had slain, as he said:

"It's awful dismal at nights, I can tell you, and there's a mean old owl that always sits on the fallen tree and hoots at me. But I don't mind so much in the daytime."

CHAPTER III

THE WOLF IN LAMB'S CLOTHING.

HARDLY had the excitement of the intended mail-robbery died away than young Adams met with another adventure that did not terminate quite so successfully for him.

He had become a very hero in the neighborhood, was looked upon by even old men with admiration and curiosity, and held up to the youths of the country as an evidence of what a young lad could do.

The village school, by which he passed going and coming in his rides, whenever he was late in starting, was turned out for the children to see him go by, and when he returned, after school-hours, many a poor lad who was kept in felt himself partly rewarded by getting a bow from the young mail-rider.

One morning, when the two riders, whose mail he took from the village, were again late, Jimmy found at the store, which was the post-office too, a man whom the postmaster introduced to him as an itinerant parson traveling through the country in the endeavor to do good.

"Parson Flemming goes your road, boy, and as he is a stranger, you will have to be his guide," said the postmaster.

The boy looked at the doleful face of the parson and came to the conclusion that he would have a most dismal ride of it, but he said he would be glad to show him the way.

The parson stood by while the mail was made up and placed in the saddle-bags, and then the two mounted.

Jimmy was on a new horse, one he had bought with his earnings, and he was very proud of his purchase, though he was a fiery, seemingly vicious animal.

The parson was also well mounted on a sober-looking white mare which, however, had good points.

Together they started off, and once out of the village and the parson became quite lively, told the boy pleasant stories, and quite won his confidence.

"I have a desire to go by the spot where you met with your adventure, my son," said the parson, as they reached the short-cut through the woods.

Then he got the young mail-carrier to tell him all about it, and the two drew rein side by side and gazed intently down upon the grave of the disowned son, when, quick as a flash, the parson raised his whip, and brought the butt of it down with telling force, upon the unsuspecting head of the boy.

It was a stunning blow, and the boy saw it coming, but not in time to avoid it, and he dropped from his saddle like a log, though he seemed to drive the spurs into his horse's flanks before he fell.

With a wild snort the animal bounded away, ere the parson could seize his bridle-rein, and, having been over the road several times before, dashed down the narrow gap leading to the stream, crossed and ran like a deer.

Uncaring for the boy the parson sped after the flying horse, lashing the animal he rode at every bound she made, to make her overtake the mail-rider's horse.

Had it been either of Jimmy's other nags, the really fast animal of the pursuer would have overtaken him; but the boy's horse was a rapid runner and kept ahead of the pretended parson, in spite of every effort to catch him.

After a run of several miles, finding that the mail-bags were still beyond his reach, the man halted his tired horse, at the same time cursing bitterly his ill-luck, for there was a valuable package in the mail-bags he had laid a deep plan to get.

Knowing that the country would be aroused, as soon as the riderless horse ran into the next village, the robber set off in flight, uncaring for the poor boy whom he had so cruelly imposed upon and left lying like dead in the road.

But the youthful mail-rider was by no means dead.

He had a thick hat on, also a thick head of hair, and fortunately a thicker skull, or the blow of the lead-loaded whip-handle would have killed him, for, as it was, it cut the scalp to the bone.

Recovering consciousness, the boy at first was unable to collect his scattered senses; but soon recalled what had happened and the base treachery of the pretended preacher.

Rising, he bathed his head in the creek, moistened his handkerchief and binding it around the wound, started on the road to his destination.

"I hope that he didn't catch Rocket, for I started him off well," he kept muttering to himself as he strode along.

As night overtook him he felt very lonesome, and whistled to keep himself company; but on he trudged, until presently there came a sharp yelp near him.

He knew the sound well, for it was the bark of the wolf, for the woods were by no means free from these pests.

He had often seen them when alone in his hunts; but then he had his rifle with him, which of late he had not carried.

Now he had his double-barrel pistol, and though not afraid of being attacked, he yet did not like such a savage companion for a tramp at night.

Noticing that the wolf gave a howl ever and anon, as he trotted along after him, he knew that he was calling others, and this was no cheering thought.

Soon the howls were answered from the dark depths of the forest, and ere long a dozen gaunt forms were prowling behind him, whining, snarling and snapping.

Still the brave boy held on, keeping up his presence of mind, for he knew the slightest sign of fear on his part would be the signal for the wolves to spring upon him.

Gradually the pack increased in numbers, until nearly two-score were around him, for they gained courage as others came and ran in front of him and upon either side, yet always keeping at a respectful distance.

Some would stand in his very path, snarling viciously as he approached, and hoping that he would halt in ahead of them; but boldly he moved on, and they broke from his advance with angry yelps.

Once they waited until he came so close that he was determined to show them that he had the means to protect himself, and thrusting forward his pistol he fired at those directly in front, and wheeling quickly, at those behind him.

In spite of his danger, his nerve was steady, and he dropped two of the savage brutes in their tracks, and scattered the rest in wild terror.

Then on he went, but he knew that he would soon have company again.

As they threw themselves upon their dead companions and tore them in pieces the hubbub of howls was fearful, and enough to strike terror to the stoutest heart.

But the boy at once determined to load his pistol to be ready for them again, when, to his horror, he discovered that his ammunition pouch was not on his belt.

For a moment he was dumb with amazement and dread, for he felt how helpless he was then.

It had evidently come unhooked when he fell from his horse.

What to do he did not know, until suddenly he spied a tree with limbs near the ground.

Had he attempted to climb it with the pack at his heels, he well knew it would be the signal for them to rush upon him.

Now he was alone, and he bounded toward the tree.

As he did so, he heard the yelps behind him, and knew that some of the savage brutes had

already finished their meal and were hot on his trail.

Like the very wind he went along, reached the tree, sprung into the lower limbs and just reached a place of safety when a dozen wolves were snarling savagely beneath him.

"Jimminy! but that was close," he said, and he gazed down upon the pack, which was momentarily increasing.

And for a couple of hours he sat there, and then he heard the fall of hoofs and voices in loud conversation approaching, and the wolves at once decamped as half a dozen horsemen rode in sight.

Hailing them, they came to the tree, and to his joy the boy saw his own horse, led by the farmer who had aided him in his other adventure.

"He came to the gate, my lad, and neighed, and I knew something was wrong, so got the boys and a few neighbors to come and look you up," said the good farmer.

Jimmy quickly made known his adventure with the pretended preacher, and mounting his horse rode on his way, leaving the farmers to look up the scoundrel while he delivered the mail, which he did without further accident, and a second time became a hero.

But his mother was so wretched at the dangers he ran as mail-rider she begged him to give it up and come back home, and, an obedient son that he was, he obliged her, though the risky life he led was beginning to have a great charm for him.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SCHOOL-BOY.

SHORTLY after Jimmy's return to the paternal roof-tree, he was persuaded by his parents to go to the country school, and feeling that he did need learning, as he was quite backward in his studies, though far advanced in the art of hunting and other sports, he consented to attend, and each morning rode there on horseback.

He studied hard, for he was determined not to be foot of his class when he was the hero of the school; but the teacher, for some reason, did not like him.

Perhaps he did not like it because the youth did not cringe at his look and start at his call, and it may be that he dated his dislike to one day when he found an exceedingly correct likeness of himself upon the blackboard, for which a young lad with artistic talent was going to be whipped, when our lad stepped forward and said he was the artist.

The teacher disbelieved him, and the one accused said he was the guilty one, and he really was; but he was a sickly lad, and little Adams did not want to see him whipped as he knew the Tartar, as the boys called the teacher,

would whip him, and consequently had generously told a story.

"If you did that you can do it again, and I wish to see you," said the teacher.

Instantly young Jimmy took up the piece of chalk, and to the surprise of all the scholars, drew a caricature of the teacher that was a better work of art than the other, for he had really a talent for drawing.

That settled it in Tartar's eyes, and young Adams got a thrashing which he took like a man, though it was a severe one.

As if to keep his hand in, he turned upon a little girl, who had displeased him, and was bringing his rod down upon her, when Jimmy sprung upon him with savage fury, wrenched the whip from his hand and showered upon the surprised teacher such rapid blows that he rushed in terror from the school-house.

Seeing that he held the fort, and that the children were wild with excitement, the boy-master took the master's desk, rapped for order, and calmly dismissed the school, after which he took the little girl he had saved from a beating under his protection and left the scholastic cabin, just as the teacher, armed with a handful of switches, was returning to retake the citadel.

Springing upon his horse, and drawing the timid little miss up behind him, Jimmy dashed away, and carried the wee girl to her home and made known what had occurred, after which he went to his own abode and told his parents that he guessed he had knowledge enough for awhile.

The master called at the Adams homestead and told his story; but the truth had already been heard from several of the children, and Farmer Adams plainly informed "Tartar" that his son had graduated for the present under his teaching, though they did not uphold him in having beaten the teacher with his own rod of discipline.

CHAPTER V.

THE STRANGE GUESTS.

How strange is it that Destiny seems to direct our steps at times, to work out results we little dream of, as sometimes an evil act will result in general good.

It so happened one day that Farmer Adams wished to send his son upon an errand that would occupy him for several days, as it was to take a wagon to a kinsman who lived a long distance off for some seed wheat, which he had of a very superior kind.

At any other time Jimmy would have gone without a word; but he had just arranged for a camp-hunt with some young companions, and refused to go, which made his father very angry.

Jimmy appealed to his mother, and she sided with his father, and angry words fol-

lowed, and the youth went to his room that night with bitterness in his heart.

The more he brooded, the more he felt that he had been injured by his parents, and at last he wrote a cold note of farewell, left it on his table and packing up his traps, crept out of the house and departed, as he believed, forever.

He had taken his favorite horse, the one which he had ridden the day the pretended preacher had knocked him from the saddle, and only such other things as he had purchased with his own money, which he had earned as a mail-rider.

For several days he held on his way, going toward the west, which he had long wished to do, and one evening, just at sunset, he came to a church by the roadside.

It was the Sabbath day, and hearing singing within he could not resist the inclination to hitch his horse and enter.

It was a peaceful little church, with its burying-ground encircling it, and the sweet singing within, the hour, and his having turned his back upon his home, impressed him deeply.

All travel-stained as he was he softly entered, slipped into a back pew, and then started as he saw before the chancel a coffin, and heard the low wailing of a voice in sorrow.

"Who is dead?" he asked, of a man in the same pew, and not with any idea that he would know the deceased if told, but merely because he wanted to speak to some one.

"Poor Bennie Elgin's mother, widow Elgin," whispered the man.

"Thank you," he mechanically said.

"Did you know her?" asked the man.

"No."

"She was a widow, and Bennie was her only son, and he was so wild and wicked it broke her heart. He ran off from home and it made her down sick, and he came back yesterday to find her dead, and now he feels remorse, for just hear how he sobs and he is nearly a man in years."

It was a simple story, though alas! one that is too often true in this world; but it touched the boy listener to his inmost soul, and he bowed his head, and the tears welled up in his eyes.

Out of the little church then came the minister, and the pall-bearers with the coffin, and behind them the white-faced, quivering son.

Mechanically the boy followed too, saw them lower the poor mother into her grave, saw the earth thrown in, heard the heart-rending sobs of the prodigal son, and then, with the crowd he turned away in the gathering darkness.

Straight to his horse he went, and mounting, turned back on the homeward trail, muttering:

"I was a brute to get angry with my good old parents, and will return and ask them to forgive their wicked boy, or, one day I might go back to the old place and it would be too late."

And back he went, arriving home late one evening, at a time which he knew was past the bed-hour of the old couple.

To his surprise he saw a light in the sitting-room, and crept up to the window, silencing the faithful watch-dog, who welcomed him with a bark, by a stern word, and looked within.

What he saw caused him to start in terror, rub his hands over his eyes, and look again.

His mother was seated in her easy-chair, but she was securely *bound there*, and a cloth was over her mouth.

His father lay upon the floor, his feet to the fire, and bare, and his hands were bound securely, while he was firmly tied upon a plank.

Over him bent two cruel-looking men, who were just drawing him nearer to the fire, as though to put his feet in the flames.

"Tell us now where your gold is hidden, or we will burn your feet to cinders!" said one of the men, sternly.

"Yes, we will kill you if you do not, for we are desperate, and will have your gold," said the other.

"Before Heaven, I have no gold here, men. I did have, but I carried it to town with me two days ago," groaned the old farmer.

"You lie, and you shall tell," was the vicious response.

In vain did the terrified, horrified wife try to move or cry out; she could not utter a word, or release herself from her bonds, and saw her husband slowly moved nearer the fire.

"It is your last chance, Adams, so tell," cried one of the men.

But they were his last words, for there was a tingle of glass mingling with a sharp report, and the man fell dead—shot through the brain.

At the same instant the door was dashed open and in sprang the tall form of the returned son, and a pistol covered the heart of the remaining robber ere he could turn upon the intruder or grasp a weapon.

A cry of joy broke from the father's lips, and the old mother fainted from very gladness.

When she recovered she found her husband and son bending over her and the robbers nowhere visible, for one lay dead out on the porch and the other securely bound by his side.

Then Jimmy heard the story of how they had asked to be entertained for the night, and had betrayed the hospitality extended to them.

And he humbly asked his father and mother to forgive him, but the former said:

"Don't speak of it, my son, for if you had

gone after the wheat you would have been still absent, and nothing would have saved me from those devils, while, as it is, it has all come out well."

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPECTER OF THE LAKE.

FOR some time after his fortunate return to his home, Bruin remained upon the farm, devoting himself to aiding his father and hunting, but more particularly to the latter.

At night he used to study and recite his lessons to his mother, who was well-educated, and in this way learned far more than he had at school, and certainly had a far more agreeable teacher than was old Tartar.

Some months thus passed along pleasantly, and as the robber guest who had been killed by Bruin had been buried the day after the affair, and his accomplice taken to the town jail, tried and convicted at once, the matter had ceased to be a cause of excitement in the neighborhood, though the youth was still looked upon with curiosity and admiration wherever he went.

One night a farmer stopped at the Adams house, and his face was pale and manner nervous, for he said he had seen a ghost.

Of late there had been rumors floating about of a specter having been seen by several in various parts of the forest and along the lake shores, and this report, coming from a man known to be reliable, excited the amazement of Farmer Adams and his wife, and the deepest interest of their son.

The farmer was so "tuckered out," as he expressed it, that he willingly accepted the invitation to stay all night, as he said his folks were not expecting him home for a day or two, he having been to a distant town on business.

"Tell us about it, brother Gains," said Mrs. Adams, who had belonged to the same church as the farmer, and therefore claimed him as a brother in the Lord.

"I'll tell you, folks, all about it," and having, in spite of the ghost, eaten a good supper, the farmer pushed his chair back from the table and began:

"You see there have been stories going around of late about hunters about the forest and the shores seeing a ghost—have you seen any ghost, my boy, for you are out a great deal, I know, and having kilt two men would be the most likely ghost-sighter in the country!" and Farmer Gains turned to Bruin.

"No sir, I have seen nothing of the kind, though I go seldom up to the part of the lake where you saw your ghost," answered the youth.

"Well, it was just 'twixt daylight and dark, and I was coming quietly along the horse-path, for I'd cut through from the main-road, thinking I'd fetch your house, Farmer Adams, 'bout supper-time, when I saw a white object

coming through the trees and making for the water.

"I looked at it hard and seen that it were a woman, for her hair hung down her back, and she were dressed in white, with a robe hanging down from her shoulders.

"I hollered to her, but she never looked at me, and reaching the shore sprung into a white canoe and glided out from the land, standing up, and without any paddle just gliding over the water.

"Just then there came over my head a horrid screech, and though I now think it was an owl, it skeert me that bad then, that my horse were pushed hard until I seen the gate leadin' into your farm, brother Adams."

"I must go and look up this ghost," said Bruin, quietly.

"Don't do it, my son, for evil befalls those who go snooping round looking into the supernatural," said Farmer Gains, earnestly.

"No, my boy, you had better let things not intended for us to understand, alone," said Mrs. Adams.

But though Bruin made no further reply, he thought considerably upon the matter, and made up his mind that he would yet solve this mystery of the Specter of the Lake.

Work upon the farm prevented him from putting his determination into execution for some weeks, and in that time various other persons had seen the specter, either strolling along the shores of the lake, or gliding over its waters, and apparently without the use of a paddle.

She never spoke when spoken to, and seemed to be not of the earth, to those who saw her in the twilight, or moonlight, for she was never seen at other times.

Some said she was the spirit of an Indian maiden, who had committed suicide by drowning, rather than marry a warrior her father wished her to, when she loved another, and others told of a young girl who had died one day in the stage-coach going along the highway, and been buried by the roadside.

Whoever, or whatever it was, it was certain that the neighborhood was strongly excited over the mysterious Specter of the Lake.

CHAPTER VII.

BRUIN SURPRISED BY A NAMESAKE.

THE more Bruin Adams, for I call him by the name he is best known by, though he did not win that appellation until he was seventeen—heard these rumors, the more he determined to solve the mystery.

But as his father kept his eye on him all day in the farm work, and even went hunting with him, and his mother taught him his lessons every night, he knew that he was closely watched to prevent his stealing off on a ghost-hunting expedition.

One day, however, Mrs. Adams got a letter, telling her that some kinsfolk were coming, to spend a few weeks at the farm, and all was such busy preparation, that the dear old lady forgot all about the specter, and suggested to Bruin that he take his gun and fishing-rod, and get some game and fish.

This was just the opportunity Bruin was waiting for, and armed with his rifle and revolver, for he had lately purchased a weapon of the latter description, and carrying along his fishing-tackle, he started for the lake, incidentally remarking to his mother that he *might not* return that night if his luck was bad.

"Be back in time for dinner to-morrow, my son," answered the busy woman, still oblivious of the specter in her duties of preparation.

Bruin promised and set out, and straight to the lake he went.

A careful examination of the shores showed him where, at one point, there were a number of tiny tracks going and coming, and the marks of a light form in the sand.

Two miles up the lake he had a bark canoe that his uncle Grizzly had had before him, and which an Indian chief had made. Often both had used it in their hunting and fishing excursions, and its hiding-place was a tall, hollow tree.

To this tree Bruin went, climbed up to the large hollow and was reaching his hands in to seize the bow of the canoe and draw it out, when they were almost put in the mouth of a huge bear.

There was a sudden growl, and the start threw the youth from his seat and he tumbled to the ground, but was as nimble as a cat and caught on his feet.

The savage brute instantly followed, but as she turned around to come down the tree, for a bear cannot come down head first, I suppose my readers know, Bruin got several good shots at the head of his future namesake, and the animal fell dead at his feet.

He was delighted at his victory, for this was his first bear, and set to work skinning it and cutting it up to hang in the trees until he could go and get a horse to carry it home.

While thus engaged he got a grab from behind, just below his jacket, and jumped clear over the carcass he was bending over, for he had not known any living human or brute creature was near him and his mind was running upon the ghost.

To his surprise and delight he beheld a small cub gazing wonderingly at him, and another clambering down the tree.

Instantly he sprung upon the little animal that fought savagely, and gave him several scratches and bites, but was secured in safety, and then came the tug of war with the other one, that had begun to crawl back to his hole in the tree at seeing the fight with his brother the boy.

This youngster was also conquered and secured, and after completing his work, Bruin slung one of the cubs over his shoulder, and started homeward at a trot, determined to first secure his game.

His parents were delighted at his capture, though he didn't tell them why he was getting the canoe, when he discovered the bear, and his father returned with him after the game.

It was late in the afternoon when Bruin saw his father depart, leading the horse he had ridden back, and which had the cub and game strapped on him, and he said indifferently:

"I'll camp to-night, father, and come in with a string of fish and some game by noon to-morrow."

Farmer Adams doubtless suspected that his daring son was bent on ghost-hunting, but he merely said:

"Don't be rash, my boy."

"No, father," was the quiet answer, and the farmer rode back with his bear meat and cub, the latter snarling and snapping savagely at being a prisoner.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRAILING A SPECTER.

As soon as Farmer Adams was out of sight, Bruin climbed up the huge tree, and drew out of the hollow the light bark canoe, which hardly weighed thirty pounds.

He patched up a few weak places in it, took one long and one short paddle in his hands, and shouldering the canoe, carried it to the lake side.

Launching it, he sprung in and started up the lake, and stopped near the place where he had seen the tracks the day before.

An examination showed him that the specter had been there since he had last visited the spot, and going further up the coast shore, he securely hid his canoe beneath the branches of an overhanging tree.

The prow was turned out into the lake, the paddles were in their place, so that the youth could spring in, if in haste, and dart out at once from his place of concealment.

Then the young hunter went ashore, and seeking the trail left by the small foot, followed it into the forest.

For full a quarter of a mile it led him, and then he came upon the banks of a small stream, across a part of which a small net was ingeniously spread, and which held several fine fish.

"The ghost gets hungry at any rate," said the boy, as he discovered the secret of her visit to the forest, and he mentally commented upon her taste for getting finer fish than he could in the lake.

Here, concealed in a thicket, he waited for the coming of the specter.

As the shadows began to deepen, he felt fully the loneliness of his situation, and uncom-

fortably before him would rise the dead faces of the two men whom he had killed, and he grew quite nervous.

But he had a brave heart, believed little in the supernatural, and checking the growing desire to skip homeward at a lively pace, and leave ghost-hunting to others, he determined to remain and meet the result unflinchingly.

Twilight at length fell upon the scene, and then dimly in the distance he beheld the specter gliding rather than walking toward him.

His eyes became riveted upon the slender form, and his heart almost ceased to beat.

She was attired in a loose-flowing robe of white, her dark hair hung down her back far below her waist, and what seemed to be a sheet, in the uncertain light, fell from her shoulders and waved out behind as she went along.

She walked directly to the spot where the net was set, took out two fish, released the other, again set her trap, and turned away.

Then the boy stepped from his concealment and began to slowly follow her.

Straight to the shore she went, her form gliding through the darkening forest, and indeed looking most spectral-like.

Into her canoe she got, and standing up began to slowly move out into the lake.

The moon was just rising, and as the boy reached his canoe he saw that the arms of the apparition moved, and yet the hands held no paddle.

She stood upright, and the mere swaying of her arms seemed to send the light craft over the waters fully as fast as she could have urged it with a paddle.

Out from the dark shelter then the youth's canoe shot in pursuit, and by a few vigorous strokes he saw that he was gaining.

This he did not wish to do, as he cared only to follow her to her retreat across the lake, for she was heading over to a dark wooded cliff upon the other shore.

Something at last seemed to tell her that an eye was upon her, for she glanced around and beheld the canoe following her.

Instantly her arms swayed more rapidly, and the canoe fairly bounded forward.

But Bruin was not to be thrown off so easily, and he too sent his light canoe flying over the quiet waters.

For awhile he seemed not to gain upon the woman, and then, after a mile had been gone over, he saw that he was drawing nearer.

This seemed to induce fatigue on the part of the ghost, and finding that she was not able to leave him behind, the youth slackened his pace and the two canoes glided on at equal speed, yet what was the power of locomotion in the one before him Bruin Adams could not guess.

At length, when the wooded cliff was not

far away, and the white belt of sand at its base glittered like silver in the moonlight, the youth put in his best strokes and landed but a few lengths behind the white-robed form.

As her canoe struck the shore, at the base of a large tree, she had bounded along the sandy beach toward a break in the cliff.

But hot on her trail ran the youth, and reaching the canyon, he saw her white robe fluttering as she sped on ahead up the hillside.

Up the canyon she ran, turned, and suddenly disappeared from sight in the shadow of the overhanging cliff.

The next instant the boy reached the spot, to suddenly start back, as he beheld before him, kneeling upon the ground, her arms stretched forth toward him in supplication, the one he had been in chase of, and heard from her lips the pleading cry:

"Spare me, for the love of God!"

CHAPTER IX.

BRUIN SOLVES THE MYSTERY.

THE sudden appeal of the supposed specter to Bruin Adams nonplused him completely.

He had followed the Specter of the Lake to discover the strange secret and win the name of hunting it down.

He had not thought of pursuing a woman, for he had hardly looked at her in that light, so thoroughly had her name become connected with the supernatural.

Now he saw before him a woman, upon whose pale, lovely face the moonlight fell, revealing every feature distinctly.

Her form was slender and graceful, and clad in garments of white woolen material, while the waving cloak she wore was a blanket, answering the place of a cloak.

Exactly what he had expected to find Bruin did not know; but when he found a young and beautiful woman appealing to him to spare her, he certainly was completely abashed.

But when she repeated her appeal, as he stood silent before her, he said, quickly:

"I don't want to harm you, miss, and only followed you because folks said you was a ghost."

"Ah, no, I am real flesh and blood, though there are those who dearly wish I was in the spirit-land, and that is why I am hiding here, for I know not where else to go."

Her voice was soft and sweet, and its tone of sadness touched the boy's heart, and he said, quickly:

"Oh, yes, you can find a better place to live than here, for my parents would be glad to have you at the farm."

"You are very kind; do you live far from here?"

"Yes, about twelve miles; but I often come to the lake hunting and fishing, though this time I came to hunt for you."

"For me?" she said, in sudden alarm.

"Yes, miss, for folks have seen you often, and they call you the Specter of the Lake."

"Is that all?"

"All? I think it's enough, miss, to be called a ghost."

"And you know nothing of me?" she asked, suspiciously.

"Only that you are scaring the country people half out of their wits."

She laughed, and then said, slowly:

"I do not like this life, and if your parents would let me live with them for awhile, I would gladly go."

"See, there is my home, and I built it myself."

She pointed to a snug little cabin of bark built back against the cliff, and protected by a fence, strongly made, of long, slender saplings set in the ground and tied together.

To get into the inclosure she opened a small gate, and ushered the lad within.

It was a cozy spot, and showed taste and ingenuity in the building.

The hut was about ten feet square, compactly built, and had a door and window.

A chimney of clay was built against the cliff, and upon the hearth were a few cooking utensils, while a bunk, chair and table were the only articles of furniture in the room.

A small rifle and shot gun hung on brackets on the wall, and in her belt she carried a knife and pistol.

A few clothes hung on a peg, a pair of men's boots of the smallest size were in the corner, and a robin in a wicker cage completed the objects of interest in the little cabin.

"Why do you live here?" asked the youth with an emphasis upon the pronoun that showed that it was interest, rather than curiosity that prompted the question.

"I will tell you when you take me to your home," she said.

"Then come now," was his reply.

She silently obeyed by gathering together what traps she needed, and saying calmly:

"I am ready."

He led her to the shore, and she stepped into her canoe, while he went to his own.

As the two moved off upon the waters, Bruin most anxiously gazed at the white canoe to see the *modus operandi* of its locomotion, and discovered that a small rope was fastened securely to the root of the tree and under water, and passed through rings in the bow and stern of the light craft.

Standing up in the center the ghostly-looking woman seized the rope and by pulling upon it, for it was fastened at the other end to the shore nearly a third of a mile off, drew herself along at a rapid rate.

"I thought I would avoid being sought after, if I played ghost, and when men have

followed me on shore, they have taken to their heels, when they have seen me glide over the waters without any seeming effort," she explained to Bruin.

Arriving at the other shore of the lake, Bruin securely hid both canoes in the hollow tree, and the two set off to walk to the farm.

It was just sunrise when Bruin and his "ghost" arrived in sight of the homestead, and his father and mother, who saw him coming, gazed upon the strange being by his side with a great deal of awe and even more curiosity.

But their hearts were in the right place, and they gave the young woman welcome, and then heard her story of how she had been left an heiress by her father, and an uncle had become the executor of her estate and her guardian.

He had taken her to his home, and as the will, if she died, left him the property, he and his wife had entered into a base plot to get her out of the way.

They dared not kill her, so they said she was crazy, locked her in a close room, and at last were taking her to an asylum, when she escaped.

She feared to go where she would be seen, and determined to live alone in the woods.

So she bought what things she needed, found a retired place on the lake and built her little cabin, and there, for one year, had dwelt alone.

Having espoused her cause Bruin did not let the matter rest, but sought the home of her uncle and guardian, and found himself and family reveling in the wealth of the poor girl.

He was a shrewd boy and he at once put the entire case in the hands of a distinguished young lawyer, who put detectives to work to hunt up clues, and himself returned with the youth and heard the whole story from the lips of the persecuted girl.

Deeply impressed with her beauty the young lawyer set to work, and two months after he won the case against her cruel uncle.

But the romance did not end there, for Grace Field, the maiden, remained at the Adams homestead until she was claimed as the bride of the young lawyer, and Bruin was not only the "best man," though but sixteen years of age, but won greater fame for having bravely hunted down the mystery of the Specter of the Lake.

CHAPTER X.

A FIGHT WITH A DESPERADO.

SIX months after the romance of the Specter of the Lake, Death stalked boldly into the Adams homestead, and, not content with laying low the noble old farmer, laid his icy touch also upon the pulse of his devoted wife,

ere her husband had grown cold in his grave.

It was a bitter blow to poor Bruin, and, as soon as a married sister moved to the farm to take care of it as half-heir, the boy determined to start for the Far West to look up his uncle, "Old Grizzly, the Bear Tamer of the Rocky Mountains," of whose daring deeds in that wild land many stories daily found their way to the scenes of his boyhood.

Like a bride who does not care to go dowryless to her husband, Bruin was not willing to seek his uncle as though he had come for a support, so he took great pains in getting up an outfit for his trip.

His bear-skin had been most thoroughly dressed, and served as a bed, and he bought several very elegant blankets for himself and as presents to his uncle.

A pair of revolvers, a superb rifle and bowie-knife, plenty of ammunition, also as presents to Old Grizzly, with numerous other articles of use and comfort, were packed on a stout horse, which Bruin denominated his "pack-mule."

Mounting a wiry little animal, a late purchase of his own, and with just two hundred dollars in his pocket, Bruin set forth on his trip to the West.

Until his horses were pretty well fagged he traveled along the roads.

But, upon arriving at Toledo he drove a shrewd bargain with the railroad agent for the transportation of himself and horses to Chicago.

He bought food for his horses, got a supply of crackers and cheese for himself, and an occupant of a box-car started on his travels by rail, which was a novelty to him, as his only other experience of the kind was when he had gone to Albany thwart the schemes of the treacherous uncle of the maiden who had figured as the Specter of the Lake.

It was a tedious and long ride, but the boy did not mind it, and was at last set down in Chicago, assuredly a stranger in a strange land.

But Bruin was by no means a greenhorn, and soon got "accommodations for man and beast," and devoted himself to sight-seeing for several days.

Then he again started on his way, riding through the country, and after long weeks upon the road arrived in Denver without adventure.

There he became quickly initiated into wild border life, by a ruffian who sought a difficulty with him by insulting remarks.

Bruin saw that the man was intoxicated, and wished to avoid trouble, so left the balcony where he was seated, although several voices called out to him:

"Don't back, youngster, or you won't dare show yerself in these heur parts."

Bruin was not afraid of the man, and con-

scious of his strength, in spite of his youth, felt confident that he could whip his insulter in a fair fight, and was fully as good a shot, should it come to pistols; but he was not of a quarrelsome nature, and determined not to be drawn into a fracas just to please a lot of idle loafers.

But the bully followed him into the office of the tavern, at which he was stopping, and deliberately snatched from his hands a paper he had picked up to read, while he said:

"Look-a-heur, youngster, I were a-catechisin' yer, an' you walked off while I were a-talkin', so I wants yer ter understan' that I are a king-bee round heur, an' hain't ter be slighted."

"If you don't leave me alone, you'll find I won't slight you," said the youth, quietly.

"Now what would one like you do with a man like me?" sneered the bully.

"Do you want me to show you?"

"Yas."

"Well, as I have had cause enough I think I will."

And with the words the hard fist of the youth shot out, and the man went heels over head into the corner.

"Did a mule kick yer, Fred?"

"Say, Fred, yer hes tumbled down."

These cries, and more of them, came from the crowd, as the half-stunned and decidedly astonished bully arose slowly, his hand upon his revolver.

But ere the "Look-out, boy," came from one of the crowd, Bruin saw his act, and leaping upon him with the spring of a panther, wrested the weapon from his hand, and then rained blows into his evil face until he fell over insensible.

"Boy, take the advice of a man who means you well, and levant out of this town afore Fred the Boss comes to, for he'll have your life," said a man, in a kindly tone, coming up to the youth.

"I thank you, sir, but I am not to be scared out of town by any bully."

"I came to stay here several days and I shall stay."

"He is a desperate fellow, and better with his weapons than his fists."

"I should pity him if he wasn't; but if he comes on me again I'll not use my fists upon him, though I want no trouble with him."

Then others of the crowd came around the youth, and he was congratulated upon all sides for the very elegant manner in which he had punished a man who was a perfect terror in the town, and never content unless in a difficulty.

In the mean time the intimate friends of the bully soon fetched him round all right, and at once he went on the search for the youth, and with blood in his eye and murder in his soul.

Bruin had been strolling through the town, accompanied by the man who had warned him against the bully, and the eyes of the latter suddenly fell upon the ruffian approaching with several of his intimates at his heels.

"Come into this store, for yonder comes Fred the Boss, and he does not see you."

"I shall not run from him, and if he is looking for me, this is a good place for him to find me, and the trouble will be over," said the youth, firmly.

"You are a game youngster, and I'll see you through."

"How are you on the draw?" said his new-found friend.

"I'm pretty good, I guess."

"And on the shot?"

"I'm a good shot."

"Well, be ready, and don't let him get the drop on you, for he's heart-sure every time."

"See how you punished him, for he looks like he'd been in a prize-fight," and the man alluded to the bully's face, which was patched up with court-plaster, and considerably swollen, while one was half-closed.

Bruin made no reply, and as they drew nearer, his friend said:

"Well, he'll make a sick-looking corpse, if you kill him."

It was now evident to every one on the street that there was going to be trouble, and the friends walking by the side of Fred the Boss separated quickly from him, as all saw the youth approaching.

As for Bruin, he walked calmly along, his new-found friend by his side, and his eyes fastened upon his enemy.

They were both on the same side of the street, and must pass within a foot of each other, unless one or the other drew a weapon, and the very attempt would precipitate matters.

When within about twelve paces of the youth, Fred the Boss dropped his hand upon his revolver, drew it out and fired.

Whether the whipping he had received stiffened his arm, and his swollen eye had its sight dimmed, no one knew; but certain it is, that, quick as was his act, and he was noted for quickness in drawing and emptying a revolver, Bruin had his weapon leveled hardly a second later, and while the bully's bullet merely chipped a piece out of his hat, his ball struck dead-center in the forehead of the desperado, who sunk dead in his tracks.

CHAPTER XI.

IN THE HANDS OF THE AVENGERS.

His killing of the desperado in Denver gained for Bruin a notoriety he did not like by any means, for he hated to win fame through taking the life of a human being.

The stranger with him, and who had proven

a friend, happened to be a United States detective, and his evidence was sufficient to clear the youth in the eyes of the authorities, and he was dismissed from the office of the justice in ten minutes, with thanks for having rid the country of a very dangerous character.

The name of the Boss Boy was at once bestowed upon the young hero, and he was anxious to escape the sycophants who gathered around him, and soon bade farewell to the town and started on to the mountains to find his uncle.

He had met several who knew Old Grizzly Adams as a hunter of the Rocky Mountains, with a camp somewhere near the head-waters of the north fork of the Platte, river and he determined to set out on his journey and find him, undeterred by the dangers of the road he would have to travel.

His pack-horse had broken down, and he had to purchase another animal, which left him with but a few dollars, after a few other purchases he made; but his riding-horse was as good as ever, and having been thoroughly rested by his delay in Denver, Bruin determined to lose no longer time.

As his uncle was pretty well known as a strange character and a great hunter, he did not anticipate much trouble in finding him, for he had been directed to different mining and hunting camps on the way, where he could learn something more respecting the exact whereabouts of Old Grizzly.

The first night out from Denver he went into a solitary camp off the trail a little distance, and, after looking after the welfare of his horses, was about to make himself comfortable, when suddenly there came a *swish*, and a coil of rope settled over his shoulders, and he was dragged to the ground, his arms pinioned to his side.

In an instant he could have thrown off the lariat thus thrown around him, had not several men sprung from behind the shelter of a huge boulder and thrown themselves upon him.

The boy fought nobly, and was hard to conquer, but there were five to one against him, and at last he was securely bound.

"Be you the one they call the Boss Boy in Denver?" asked one of his captors, a heavily-bearded ruffian armed to the teeth.

"I believe that is the name they gave me, for killing just such a wretch as you are," was the cool reply of the youth.

"Pards, he are the one, so 'thar is no use chinnin' with him, as I were thar an' seen him kill poor Fred," said another.

"I did not deny it," boldly replied Bruin.

"Then thet are all we wants, fer it saves a trial."

"A trial?"

"Yas, fer we was goin' ter give yer a trial fer killin' Fred, our dear pard, as ther jedge

let yer off; but as yer says yer kilt him it jest settles ther matter an' we pronounces yer guilty.

"Now, pards, what are ter be did with this heur game-cock?" and the speaker turned to his four villainous-looking companions.

"Kill him," came the savage cry.

"How is it ter be did?" queried the spokesman.

"Thar are my lariat," said one.

"An' heur are a tree," remarked a second.

"We is here ter drag him up," put in a third.

"An' he are present ter be hung," was the remark of the last of the four to whom the question had been put as to what should be done with the youth. Bruin had heard of border justice and injustice, and the wild deeds of wilder men; but he could not believe that when he killed a man in self-defense, as he had done, and who had sought him for trouble alone, and forced it upon him, that he would be deliberately hanged for it by a gang of desperadoes.

But one searching look into their evil faces proved to him that they were in deadly earnest, and that he need expect no mercy at their hands.

Beg for his life he would not, and yet he saw no avenue of escape, for he was wholly in their power, bound securely, and in their hearts dwelt not an atom of mercy, if the faces he gazed upon were any criterion.

CHAPTER XII

A STRANGER HAS SOMETHING TO SAY.

HAVING determined upon their course, and which in fact was already settled, as the desperadoes did not care to avenge Fred the Boss half as much as they wished to rob the youth, the gang of ruffians hastily proceeded to work.

First, they threw the lariat over a stout limb, and then put the coil around the neck of the youth.

Like a statue Bruin stood, pale, but unflinching, in spite of his having given up all hope of life.

It was just sunset, and the tops of the distant hills were yet bathed in rosy light, the birds were singing merrily in the trees, and his two horses fed near by, wholly unconcerned at the danger of their master.

Back from that scene flew the thoughts of the youth, to the old farm near Seneca Lake, and the joys he had known there in the by-gone.

He was then a little boy, listening to the stories told of his uncle, Old Grizzly, in his wild life upon the frontier; and one by one the scenes of the past floated before him.

His adventures, his mail-riding days, his hunts, his joys, all came up from the past, and then his eyes seemed to fairly behold the green

mounds in the little church-yard where slept his loved parents, and he was glad that they were dead, so as never to know what bitter fate had befallen him.

From these reveries he was rudely awakened by one of the men approaching him with a sinister leer upon his face.

There was something about the man that caused Bruin to feel that he had met him before, and under disagreeable circumstances, but when and where he could not then recall.

"You don't know me, boy?" said the man, in a hoarse tone.

"No, and yet it seems I have met you before."

"Suppose I cut this beard off, dress up in black, put on a white neck-tie, and—"

"Jupiter! you are that fellow that played the parson joke on me," cried Bruin, excitedly.

"I am," was the cool reply.

"I wish I was free from this rope, and I'd get even with you," and Bruin in vain tried to twist his hands out of the coils that held them.

"But you can't get free, and I will get even with you," said the man, with a heartless laugh.

"I never wronged you."

"You think so?"

"I know so."

"You are mistaken, my fine fellow, for you kept me from getting money I had plotted and planned to have."

"I did but my duty, for I saw your blow coming, too late to dodge it, and so spurred my horse and he outran you."

"I was in hopes I had killed you, for, by not getting that money, I was compelled to procure it in another way, and in doing so to have myself take life."

"I got caught, boy, was sentenced to the gallows, and only escaped the day before my execution by the burning down of the jail."

"I came here, and have gone from bad to worse, until I am now what you see me—a road-agent, desperado and all else that was bad, while, if I had gotten the money I knew you carried that day, I could have replaced what I had taken from the bank, and all would have been well."

"No, indeedy, for you'd have stolen more and again gotten into trouble, so don't blame me."

"But I do blame you, and you shall die for it, and I will be avenged for what you made me."

"And you kill me because you were so weak and wicked as to do wrong, and I, in doing my duty, prevented you from a greater crime!" and the youth spoke with a tone of sarcasm that greatly angered the man, for he called out:

"Come, pards, I don't want any more of lip from this young game-cock, so up with him."

The men at the other end of the lariat instantly gave a strong pull, and the feet of the struggling youth were about leaving the ground when a stranger appeared suddenly upon the scene, and stepping out from behind the huge boulder, his rifle across his arm, said, in a quaint way:

"Did yer speak ter me, pards?"

"Who the devil are you?" savagely demanded the man who had been talking to Bruin, and had given the order to hang him.

"I are a stranger from Strangerville, an' I bes come ter git acquainted with you neighbors," was the unmoved reply of the man.

CHAPTER XIII.

BRUIN ADAMS HAS THE TABLES TURNED ON HIM.

"WELL, you'll get better acquainted than you like, if you don't levant out of this and mind your own business," was the angry retort of the leader of the desperadoes.

All eyes had turned upon the stranger, at his sudden and unexpected appearance, even to Bruin's, for the lariat had been lowered and the youth again stood firmly upon his feet.

"I loves soshybil'ty, gents, an' I are glad ter hear yer speak so, an' as yer tells me ter mind my biz I'll do it, dog-goned ef I don't, by askin' yer ter interjooce me ter ther han'some young feller yer were about ter h'ist up as I comed from ahind thet boulder."

The man was one who would attract attention anywhere, from the lion-like strength, and tiger-like agility he seemed to possess in his tall form.

His shoulders were broad and perfectly square, his waist, around which was buckled a belt of arms, was exceedingly small, his feet and hands an exquisite might have been proud of, and yet his face was by no means handsome, covered with a short, iron-gray beard, and yet full of stern resolution and daring.

His eyes were small, black as ink, bright and restless, and his hair hung upon his shoulders, and was streaked with silver.

He wore a buckskin hunting-shirt, fringed leggins, stout boots, and a wolf-skin cap, with the head of the wolf and its grinning teeth in front, and tail hanging down behind.

His weapons were two old double-barrel pistols, a bowie-knife, and a long rifle, and the latter was cocked, thrown across his arm and ready for use.

"Well, you better not interfere here, old man, or you'll get what you don't want," said the leader of the gang, and his four comrades chorused:

"Thet are so, pard Wolf Hat."

The old man smiled as sweetly as though he had heard a compliment paid him, and answered:

"Yer axed me who ther devil I are?"

"Yes, and what you want heur."

"I'll tell yer, pards."

"Hes yer ever heur tell o' Old Grizzly, ther B'ar Tamer o' ther Rockies?"

"Old Grizzly?"

The name was echoed in a chorus, and Bruin Adams spoke it too.

"Yas, I are Old Grizzly, an' ef yer hes heerd o' me, yer knows I hain't ther chicken-hearted galoot ter stan' right heur an' see yer hang thet young feller."

"How can you hender us, for hanging him for murdering one of our comrades?"

"Waal, ef he hed kilt ther gang o' yer, he'd hev done good sarvice; but as yer axes ther question, I'll jist reply thet ther man as teches thet rope ag'in 'll be food fer wolves the second he do it, fer I hes ther drop on yer all with ole Iron Killer heur, an' ef yer hes eyes yer'll obsarve I hev two o' her young 'uns in my belt," and he patted his rifle and pistols affectionately.

There was not one of the desperadoes present who had not heard of Old Grizzly Adams of the Rocky mountains, and the stories of his bearing a charmed life were such, added to his superhuman strength, deadly aim, and ferocity in a fight, that though having every advantage in the way of numbers they did not care to try conclusions with him, and feeling that they were all of one mind, after a glance around him, the leader said:

"We know you, Grizzly Adams, and we want no trouble with you, for we respect you as a good man and a great hunter."

"Jist so."

"But this young man shot down one of our pards in Denver t'other day, and we have caught him, and are going to hang him."

"That must hev been yer intenshun, pards, but yer hev changed yer mind, fer I says ther boy don't die at this time, or, ef he do, he'll hev comp'ny, an' I'll be left as a mourner."

"These men lie to you, uncle Grizzly, for you are my father's brother, as I am J. F. C. Adams, and was going to find you."

The words felt like an electric shock upon Old Grizzly; but his innate caution made him keep his outward calmness and say in a quiet tone:

"You is who?"

"The son of your brother John, of Seneca Lake."

"You was a baby when I left home?"

"Yes, uncle."

"I has hed two letters from ther old place in ther past ten years, an' they said you was ridin' mail."

"Yes, I was mail-rider for a year."

"Aha! and when did you leave the old home?"

"Three months ago."

"And all well, boy?"

"My parents are dead."

"Dead! your daddy and your mammy is dead?"

"Yes, uncle."

"I declar' thar are suthin' wrong with my eyes, boy, fer—hold on thar, yer pesky varmint, fer I hain't blind, ef thar be real tears in my eyes, an' durn yer catamount souls I'll sen' yer ter ther devil in a b'ar's wag o' ther tail, ef yer even winks."

This sudden warning to the desperadoes, two of whom had sought to take advantage of the sad news from the old hunter's home, to draw their weapons on the sly, effectually checked such intention.

"I tell yer, boy, yer hits ther old man hard in tellin' him yer good daddy an' mammy hev handed in their chips; but we'll talk o' that ag'in, when these he-wolves hain't sniffin' round."

"So yer comed out heur ter find ther ole man, did yer; he! he! he!" and the old hunter chuckled with apparent delight.

"Yes, uncle."

"Then I hes turned ther tables on yer, fer I hes found you, boy," and the old man laughed again.

CHAPTER XIV.

ACCOMMODATING A DESPERADO.

THE laughter of Old Grizzly, was evidently intended to hide deeper feeling, which the coming of his nephew had caused to well up in his throat and almost choke him.

Thrice he attempted to speak, and each time he could hardly control his emotion, so he felt he must act, and at once he shouted:

"Say, heur, ye infarnal varmints, that are my nevvys, all ther way from York State, an' bein' a orphin, he hev comed heur ter find his uncle, and I are thet same, so I 'vises yer all ter git, or, by ther bones o' Daniel Boone, I'll shoot yer as I would a wolf."

"The boy may be your nephew, Old Grizzly, but he is my foe, and I have a score to settle with him, which, if he has any pluck, he'll give me a chance to get square with him, as I have sworn revenge against him."

"Waal, ef yer hes swored to it, and yer is willin' ter act squar', I guess he'll accomodate yer, or he hain't no kin o' mine, for our fambly come o' a gritty stock, as nobody ever know'd a Adams ter back out o' a diffikilty."

"I will meet the man, uncle, in any way he wishes, though he seeks revenge against me, because he did not rob the mail one day of enough money to keep him out of jail."

"Oh! thet are ther reason, are it?"

"Waal, boy pard, yer kin meet ther gent, an' ef yer don't shoot daylight through him, I will; an' ef he kills yer, then I'll bore a hole

clean through him too, so let ther revenge biz wag lively along."

All the time he had been standing there Old Grizzly had not lost sight of any movement of the desperadoes, and now, as he spoke, and still keeping his eye upon them, he walked forward and quickly cut the bonds that bound the youth.

"Waal, now let us hev this leetle biz over, an' then we parts comp'ny with these fellers, nevvv."

The desperadoes, held at bay by one man, seemed now to give up all hope of hanging and robbing the youth, for they knew his prowess, and with his uncle to aid him, felt that their chances for victory would be slim indeed.

With one exception and that one the mail-robber, they were an arrant set of cowards, and he had promised them the spoils, if they would aid him in revenging himself upon the youth.

Seeing that their spoils were now out of the question, he was determined that he should not be cheated out of his share, the revenge, and boldly offered to fight the youth, and Bruin was equally as willing to meet him, for he wished his uncle to see that the Boy Pard he had adopted was by no means a greenhorn, a coward or a slouch, in border parlance.

"Nevvy, you jist arrange terms ter suit, with thet dog-goned gerloot, an' I'll jist stan' heur an' see thet ther biz works smooth, fer things o' this kind gits hitches in 'em sometimes ef ye hain't werry partic'lar."

"What is your proposition, sir?" asked Bruin, turning to the leader of the desperadoes.

"That you meet me as man to man."

"Man ter boy, yer means," said Old Grizzly.

"He is no boy, old man."

"No, we is a forward race, we Adamsses; all of us pow'ful peert from ther cradle."

"I offered to meet you on your own terms," remarked Bruin Adams, who had stooped and picked up his belt of arms, from where one of the men had thrown it.

"With pistols?"

"With what you please."

"That's ther talk, Boy Pard; meet him with claws ef he says so."

"With knives?" queried the outlaw.

"Yes."

"Thet's biz, yer cussed varmint, so say what it's ter be."

"You are not to interfere, old man?" and the outlaw turned to Old Grizzly.

"I never interferes in a squar' fight, ef it's my own brother as is gittin' beated."

"Very well, we will say pistols, and at fifteen paces."

"I am content," replied Bruin, though he was delighted at this choice, for he had had no experience in a knife combat, though would

boldly have met his enemy with one, had knives been chosen.

"Step out ther distance, one of yer gerloots, fer I is axshus ter hev ther fun over, so I kin heur all ther news from Old Seneca."

"If luck favors me, you'll hear no news from there, old man, other than you have heard," savagely said the outlaw.

"Yer'll go to yer grave a-thinkin' it went ag'in' yer, or I don't know a cinnamon b'ar from a grizzly," said the old hunter, and as he saw that his words worried the man, he continued:

"Ther Adamsses was all born with good eyes, pard, an' if thet boy can't send a bullit whar he aims it, 'tis acause he's cock-eyed, an' squintin' don't run in our family."

One of the band now stepped the distance of fifteen paces off, for the outlaws were anxious to get away, as they had nothing to gain by remaining.

Had it been any other than Old Grizzly Adams, he would not have had it his own way altogether, at least without a trial of conclusions, but his name was a perfect terror in the mines and on the plains, and it would be a bold man that would face him, even with great odds in his favor.

As soon as the distance was measured off Bruin Adams coolly took his stand, and with revolver in hand, turned and faced his foe, who was also ready.

"Boy Pard, I gives the count up ter five, and at five yer shoots; ef thet gerloot shoots afore, I shoots him!"

"And if I kill him, what then?"

"Ef it are done squar' I hes nothin' ter say ag'in' it; but you'll allers find me a leetle quarrelsome whenever we meets arter it," was the frank reply of Old Grizzly.

"All right; I am content."

"If he kills me, pitch me into a hole in the rocks; but I am not a man to look on the dark side of life," and the outlaw smiled.

"I am glad ter see yer is cl'ar grit, ef yer be a bad man; but heur goes, an' look out both of ye."

Both men stood at a ready, the man cool and reckless, and the boy seemingly indifferent.

Slowly the old hunter counted, and all anxiously watched the result, while he, after a quick glance at his nephew, eyed the outlaw, whom he had in a line with the other desperadoes, and kept his rifle ready for use.

At the word fire, the two revolvers flashed together, the report being like one pistol.

A slight ejaculation broke from Old Grizzly's lips as he saw his nephew turn himself round, and he saw that he was hit—how badly, he could not tell.

Then his eyes turned upon the outlaw, whose face had become livid, and whose arm had

fallen to his side, though still grasping his revolver.

Twice he essayed to speak, but each time utterance failed him, until, with a mighty effort there burst from his lips:

"Curse you, boy, I've got my death-wound, and you shall have yours!"

He hastily raised his pistol as he spoke, but it fell from his hand, which a bullet had shattered, for Old Grizzly's rifle had belched forth, quick as was the act of the outlaw.

The man tried to speak, but it was in vain, and, raising his shattered and bleeding hand, he shook it fiercely at the old hunter and fell forward upon his face, dead ere he struck the ground, for the bullet sent by the youth had cut its way through his heart.

"Boy Pard, yer did that prime; but what are ther extent o' ther damage he has did yer?" and Old Grizzly gazed upon the youth.

"The bullet hit me here, uncle, just over my heart, but I was saved by this book my poor mother gave me," and the youth drew out a small Testament, in which was imbedded the bullet.

"It are a Testimint o' ther Gospil, sure as preachin', an' it hev saved you, Boy Pard, tho' ther bullet hev cut deep into ther twelve apostles.

"But I guess we'd better leave these gents ter do funeral sarvice o' their pard, while we hoops it on toward ther camps, as I hes some parchases ter make fer my b'ars."

The youth readily consented, and as it was now almost dark, he got his horses and the two departed, leaving the dead body in the charge of his outlaw comrades.

CHAPTER XV.

OLD GRIZZLY AND HIS BOY PARD.

AFTER going a couple of hundred yards, from the spot where the scene just related occurred, the old hunter and his nephew came to where a horse was dimly visible, browsing upon the juicy grass, and a dog laying near him, evidently acting as a guard.

"Here be my friends, Boy Nevvy, as yer see; this heur are Git Thar, my old hoss, an' a better traveler hain't in ther Rockies, while he hain't so dog-goned slow nuther, fer yer see he hev werry fine points."

Bruin glanced at the raw-boned animal, whose points were visible in the dim light, and said innocently:

"He has indeed, uncle."

"Yer is a jedge o' hoss flesh, Boy Pard, I sees, fer Git Thar are all I says he are.

"An' this critter are Calamity, my dorg, an' he hev got raal down hoss sense, fer he kin do all thet human kin, barrin' talkin'.

"Yer see he are glad ter see yer, tho' he hev

no tail to wag, fer a b'ar chawed it off onst, an' it hain't grow'd out again.

"See, he knows I are talkin' about him, an' he will be yer friend, outer this interdueshun I hes give yer."

"Now tell me, Boy Pard, whar was yer goin' when I come nigh an' sees how yer was fixt?"

"To find you, uncle."

"Waal, I hev saved yer thet trouble; now tell me what did yer want with me?"

"To ask you to let me live with you."

"You kin, I declar' ter gracious, fer yer is my own blood, and I'll be a daddy and mammy both to yer.

"Yer is clean grit, as I hes seen, an' yer kin shoot fer a barbecue an' no mistake, so plank yer gripper in my claw an' sw'ar we is pards."

The youth willingly grasped his uncle's hand, and then Old Grizzly continued:

"I are goin' up to ther mines, whar they has a sutler, ter git some chains ter tote back fer my b'ars."

"Chains, uncle?"

"Yas, fer I needs 'em for ther b'ars, as yer will see.

"Now we'll git back a mile or two up this heur canyon an' camp fer ther night, fer I is been made durned hungry by ther pow'ful bad news yer hes tole me.

"It hev kinder shrinked my heart up, Boy Pard, an' I hev ter hev some grub, so come along."

They both mounted their horses, and after a ride of a mile the old hunter drew reins upon the bank of a small stream, where there was a cosey spot, sheltered by large bowlders, and a most secure and delightful place to camp.

As soon as the horses were picketed out, they built a fire, and each produced his bag of provisions, and a hearty meal was indulged in, after which Old Grizzly said:

"Now I are filled up, I kin talk to yer a spell, Boy Pard.

"Yer say ther old folks is dead?"

"Yes, uncle."

"I are pow'ful sorry; but I guesses it were ther time sot down in ther Big Book ter call 'em, an' thar are no need a kickin' ag'in' it, fer you an' I hes gut ter tarn our toes up some day.

"Now tell me, does ther old home look nat'ral?"

"Yes, uncle, all is as you left it fifteen years ago, excepting father improved it considerably."

"I guess so; and settlers gittin' too thick thar now to live healthy, I guesses?"

"We have some neighbors around us, but none nearer than a mile."

"Nearer than a mile, Boy Pard? Why thet hain't breathin' room fer me.

"Up whar I lives in ther Rockies thar hain't no neighbor nearer 'n forty mile, an' I is a leetle crowded.

"I hates ter hev close neighbors, fer I loves ther air o' ther mountains an' ther pararers thet hain't being breathed in continual.

"I hes a kinder pleasant shanty, an' yer is welcome thar; but I don't want no neighbors 'ceptin' my b'ars, Git Thar, Calamity an' sich.

"I are goin' to ther sutler's, as I tole yer, ter-morrer, an' yer kin jist wait fer me heur, an' then we'll ride on tergether to ther mountains.

"Now let us tarn in."

"First, uncle, let me give you what I brought you in the way of weapons, blankets, clothing and other articles you will need."

"Why, I hes weepins an' a blanket an'—"

"Your rifle and pistols are old-fashioned, and I have brought you a rifle you can shoot very rapidly, and revolvers."

"I hes heerd o' them kind; but is they good?"

"You saw what mine did this evening?"

"Yas, it struck dead center, an' no mistake."

"And that blanket you have has been patched with wolf, bear and fox skins."

"Yas, it are patched some, I admits, an' ef I keeps on, it will be all skin an' no blankit; but it are ther warmerer fer thet, Boy Pard."

"Well, I brought you a bear skin, and I killed the bear myself," said the youth, proudly.

"I hev kilt five hundred of 'em, my boy."

Bruin was slightly crestfallen at this; but he unfastened his pack and displayed his treasures to the astonished eyes of the old hunter.

"First the rifle was examined most critically, and then the revolvers and splendid bowie-knife came in for their share.

Next came the bear skin, so highly prized, and this was cast aside with a shrug of the shoulder and the remark:

"Thet were a sickly cub, I reckons."

"It was an old bear, and she had cubs, which I captured and raised and sold to a circus man for twenty dollars."

"I'd sell 'em a grizzly fer ten, an' a cinnamon fer five.

"Thet were a good b'ar, Boy Pard, fer a circus, I don't deny, but it were but a cub fer these heur mountains, as you will diskiver.

"These blankets be as prime as a feather bed, an' fer these heur clothes I is thaukful; but I guess I'll trade ther coat an' pants off fer powder, as ef ther b'ars seen me in thet suit they'd chaw me up fer a parson, sartin as eatin'.

"We kin make ourselves most comfortable with all these fixin's, an' we will hev good times.

"Yer is a good boy, same as was yer mother an' father afore yer, an' I loves yer fer thar sake, an' fer yer own, too, an' I'll fight fer yer at ther drop o' a hat.

"Now let us try these heur blankets, an' ef

they don't make me sleep prime I are no fedge."

Leaving Calamity on guard, the uncle and nephew turned in and were soon sleeping soundly, Bruin being wholly at rest, now that he had found his famous old kinsman.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE DEN OF OLD GRIZZLY.

At the request of his uncle, Bruin Adams waited at the camp the next day, until his return from the sutler's store.

Old Grizzly bade Calamity, a cross between a bull-dog and a mastiff, to remain and get acquainted, "with my nevvie, one o' our fambly," as he expressed it, and the stump-tailed dog obeyed without any trouble.

Toward sunset the old hunter returned, and Git-Thar was pretty well loaded down with heavy chains and padlocks, which the hunter had purchased of the sutler.

Bruin quietly aided in taking them off of the saddle, but refrained from asking any questions regarding their use, though he could not conjecture what was to be done with them.

After another night spent in the pleasant camp, the two started for the home of the old hunter, and in a day's time arrived in the very heart of the mountains.

Bruin well knew that around them were hostile Indians, longing for the scalp of his uncle, but he seemed to feel no dread of the danger, when gazing upon the fearless face of the old veteran, who had lived in the midst of cruel foes for many years and defied them all.

"Does yer see thet pile o' rocks, Boy Pard?" and Old Grizzly pointed as he spoke to a lofty point of the mountain, rising above the adjoining hills.

"Yes, uncle."

"Waal, thar' are my den."

"Among those rocks?"

"Yas; it are rough lookin' from heur, but from the inside it are not so bad, as yer will see.

"But I hev been gone three days, an' I 'lowed ter be gone but two, an' I guesses thar is ther devil ter pay up in them rocks jist now."

"Do you think any one has been to your home, uncle?"

"Nary, fer ef they did they w'u'dn't stay long, now I kin sw'ar upon thet shooted Testament yer hes in yer bosom pocket."

"You then have some one to take care of the place in your absence?"

"Hev I! Waal, I jist hev, an' thar is good car' took of it, I kin sw'ar.

"Now jist let me an Git Thar lead ther way up these heur rocks, fer 'tain't ther wholesomest climbin' yer ever see, Boy Pard."

The old hunter now went on ahead, in climbing the mountain, and the skill and ease

with which Git Thar picked his way among the rocks, showed that he was as used to climbing as a goat.

At last Old Grizzly halted at a huge precipice, where all further progress seemed at an end, and with a quiet smile he said:

"Heur we is, Boy Pard; now which way?"

"I declare I am at a loss to tell you, uncle."

"Waal, yer see this heur boulder?" and he pointed to a large rock, that looked as though it had fallen from the cliff at some past date.

"Yes, uncle."

"Does yer see anything queer about it?"

"No, uncle."

"Waal, yer hes good eyes, but thar are a leetle pecooliariti 'bout it.

"See heur now," and as he spoke he dismounted, walked to the side of the boulder, lying against the cliff, and what seemed to be solid rock, was suddenly drawn aside, proving to be a curtain, and it covered the entrance to a cave, large enough to admit a horse.

The curtain was a gray blanket, of the same hue as the rock, and so ingeniously hung over the cavern entrance, that a person twenty feet away would not suspect it from being other than the solid wall of the cliff.

Into the cavern went Git Thar, and then followed Bruin's two horses, while he and his uncle brought up the rear, for Calamity had darted on ahead, as though he considered himself relieved from duty.

The passageway was a natural tunnel through the rock, and very dark, when Old Grizzly had dropped the blanket curtain into place again; but the two horses followed Git Thar as readily through the gloom as did the youth follow his uncle.

After a walk of a hundred yards there was a glimmer of light ahead, and soon they came out into a wild glen of the mountain, with precipitous sides, and running back some distance.

But it was not the wild beauty of this canyon in the very top of the mountain that struck the youth with surprise, but what he beheld there.

About the glen were a number of large trees, and to many of them were fastened savage beasts of the mountains.

First the eye of the youth fell upon a large grizzly bear chained at the very entrance to the cavern, and who seemed to be the very monarch of all, and to hold in subjection his lesser-sized subjects.

Then, fastened by stout chains to the trees, were other bears, from the cinnamon to the smaller-sized black bear.

Next were visible panthers, wild-cats, wolves and foxes, all securely chained, and all of them howling, whining, snarling, grunting, or growling, apparently with delight, but yet with a savageness in their joy that was fearful to look upon.

Fully half a hundred wild animals were in sight, and it was no wonder that the youth paused with horror and terror combined at sight of the menagerie.

"This are my den, Boy Pard, an' yer is entirely welcome, an' I are almighty glad yer hes come.

"Don't be skeert, fer this are my fambly, so they is kin ter you, an' this old grizzly are my namesake, an' ef any one o' ther gang were ter git loose, he'd chaw 'em up prime, afore he'd let 'em pass out, an' he hes ther chawin' mill ter do it, as yer sees.

"I gi'n 'em all a double feed afore I left, an' tole 'em ter go slow; but they eated it right up, I kin sw'ar, an' now they is as hungry as beasts; but I hes a supply o' meat in ther cave yonder, an' they shall hev some lunch ter knock off their appetites.

"Yer likes ther den, I hopes, nevvvy, fer it hain't perlite ter say yer don't, ef yer doesn't.

"It are a good place, an' this heur place we comed in at are ther only place we kin git out at, 'less we hes wings, which we hesn't, not bein' angils like yer good mammy an' daddy up in heaven.

"Thar are a stream o' water fer yer hosses, an' plenty o' grass, an' yer see yonder log sbanty?" and Old Grizzly pointed to a stout log cabin against one side of the canyon.

"Yes, uncle."

"Waal, thar are my home, an' I hes plenty o' grub an' welcome fer yer, an' soon as we git a leetle rested, I'll interjooce yer ter ther rest o' ther fambly."

Bruin would have declined this honor, for he was almost crazed by the wild howls and growls, whines and snarls of the "fambly," but he nodded assent, and picking his way among the wild and savage brutes, who eyed him and his terrified horses as though they believed them brought for their food, he found his way over to the cabin, and soon had his two animals in a secluded part of the glen, feeding upon the luxuriant grass with which the place abounded.

CHAPTER XVII.

BRUIN ADAMS WINS HIS NAME.

THOUGH young Adams was at first deeply impressed with Old Grizzly's "fambly," as the Bear Tamer called his savage pets, he soon got accustomed to them, and was always glad to go out and kill mountain sheep and other game to feed them on.

By degrees they got to knowing him, and apparently loving him, as much as they did Old Grizzly himself, and he had the same control of them, and they obeyed when he spoke to them, or when he used a sterner argument at any rate.

His horses also began to regard them as a part and parcel of the family in the glen, and no longer feared any of them excepting the

huge grizzly that acted as the guardian over the only means of ingress and egress to the canyon.

Old Grizzly told his nephew that he had caught nearly all of the savage brutes when young, and had reared and trained them to his liking, and only once had had a mutiny in the household, and that was when an old grizzly had gotten loose and taken a fancy to fox-meat, which did not satiate his appetite until he had killed half a dozen of those animals.

"Puffed up with his feed," said the old hunter, "thet grizzly just went on a gin'ral rumpus, knockin' cats over, huggin' black b'ars an' pattin' pant'ers with his paws, until I hed ter give him a perscription o' cold lead ter cure him."

"But what do you intend to do with them, uncle?" asked the youth.

"Waal, I hedn't thought o' thet; but they'll come in useful some time, I guesses, an' don't you think so, Boy Pard?"

"I hope so, uncle."

"So do I; but come, let us go out an' hev a raal ole hunt fer b'ar thet hain't tame."

The youth readily acquiesced in this proposition, and the two hunters left the glen, and after a walk of a couple of miles separated to meet at a given point, for, in the month he had been at the home of his strange old uncle young Adams had learned the country round about pretty thoroughly.

For some distance the youth trudged along, seeing no game of any kind, and he was beginning to feel that he would not be successful in his hunt that day, when he espied a large grizzly bear coming slowly down the mountain.

Instantly he sprung up into the low branches of a tree and concealed himself, for he saw that the bear had not seen him, and wished to get a good shot at him.

Down the mountain-side came the grizzly, and when within a hundred feet of the tree he halted and looked at a point some distance below him.

Turning his head to see what the bear had sighted, the youth beheld his uncle standing some distance off, and it was evident that he too had been unsuccessful in his hunt, was waiting for his nephew's coming, and had not discovered the huge grizzly.

Emboldened by the near presence of his uncle, the youth was about to descend and open on the bear, when his rifle suddenly slipped from his hand and fell to the ground.

At the same moment, although very hungry, and anxious to make a meal off of his namesake, the grizzly started at a lope down the hill, and his course would lead him directly under the tree, so to get down and seize his rifle the youth knew would be impossible.

He had been so accustomed to the savage brutes of late, that he had almost ceased to

dread them, and, seeing that the grizzly was coming directly beneath him, he was urged by a sudden impulse, and dropped upon his back.

With a howl of rage and fright the huge monster bounded forward at a run, seemingly wishing to escape from beneath his rider, rather than to halt and try conclusions with him.

But the grizzly had not gone half a dozen lengths before the youth recognized fully that he had made a great mistake.

He knew that his only salvation was in his uncle, and to him he yelled lustily to attract his attention.

Old Grizzly heard the cry and saw the startling and novel sight, and instantly prepared for action, while the bear, having lost his hunger in his fright, ran directly toward the old hunter, though apparently without seeing him.

The youth readily realized that if his uncle did not kill the bear he would run on until he got over his fright, and then stop, roll over, and roll him off, and the result would be far from pleasant to him, though a climax devoutly to be desired by the grizzly.

He had his knife and his revolvers in his belt; but he knew how hard a grizzly was to kill, and that a knife thrust, or bullet-wound would but madden him, and cause him to stop and have it out.

To frighten the savage brute more thoroughly, the youth yelled loudly, and drummed his shaggy sides with his heels, for he was afraid he might halt before he came in range of his uncle's rifle.

He could slip off it was true, but once relieved of the cause of his fright, the grizzly would instantly turn upon him.

Nearer and nearer drew the bear to the spot where the grim old hunter stood, and then, as if suddenly remembering his existence, the brute swerved slightly from his direct course.

This was too much for the daring young rider, and he shouted in stentorian tones:

"Blame our fool souls, here we come, uncle! Head us off!"

The answer of Old Grizzly to this appeal, was made through the muzzle of his rifle.

With such steady nerve did he aim, that the bullet pierced the eye of the brute, and brought him to his knees so suddenly that the youth was thrown over his head.

But he nimbly caught on his feet, and turning with the rapidity of lightning, opened upon the savage monster with both revolvers, for the grizzly was by no means dead.

The rapid rattle of the revolvers was music to the heart of the old Bear Tamer, and death to the grizzly bear proper, and the hunter, in his ecstasy dashed up yelling like an Indian, just as the monster of the mountain sunk to rise no more.

"Waal, Boy Pard, yer hes got out a scrape no darned fool ought ter git out of; but I fer-gives yer fer yer luck, an' ther grit yer show'd, only don't go ter ridin' grizzly b'ars through ther mountains no more."

"I have no inclination to do so again, I assure you, uncle."

"Like as not, boy."

"I got my name o' Old Grizzly from a tussle I hed with a b'ar o' thet kind onst, and it were a squar' stan' up fight of it; an' durn me, ef I don't call you *Bruin Adams* arter this, an' yer desarves the name."

"Now whar is yer rifle, Bruin, my son?"

"Back under the tree where I mounted the grizzly."

"Git it in yer gripe, while I skins this critter, fer it are ther largest hide I hev seen in a long time."

And thus it was that J. F. C. Adams got his name of "*Bruin*," by which he is to-day best known on the border.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE INDIAN TRAIL.

SEVERAL days after the "christening adventure," as Old Grizzly called Bruin's bear-ride, the uncle and nephew were out on a hunt for game for the savage pets, when the old man discovered a trail that caused him to stop and consider.

"Thar be some condemned reds around, Boy Pard, an' they is meanin' mischief," he said.

"You read that by the trail, uncle?"

"Yas, an' I tell yer what it are."

"Well, uncle?"

"Yer see huntin' parties frequently come heur in these mountains; but they don't stay long, while these hev come ter stay, fer thar village hev passed along heur."

"Now they is goin' ter hide heur fer some deviltry, an' like as not it are for a raid down on ther miners."

"Heur they kin rest thar ponies, git thar weepins in shape, an' not be diskivered, as they know few whites come ter these parts, barrin' it are me, an' when they hev got ready fer ther war-path they will jist raise durnation down in ther mines, run back heur, an' overtake ther village, which they will hev already on ther go, under charge o' ther young bucks, and push fer ther Big Horn kentry, whar they'll git mixed up with other rovin' villages o' ther red varmints an' laff tharse's sick, while ther sogers 'ill pounce upon some innercent Inguns, ef Inguns is innercent, an' lick a hull tribe o' wimmin and children, an' let ther guilty ones git off."

"That are sure as preachin'."

"You've got it down fine, uncle."

"I hev ter hev it as fine as silk, or I'd lose my ha'r."

"You see I hev studied Ingun signs, same

as yer say yer mother made you study books, an' I knows Ingin so waal I kin tell a boy pappoose from a gal pappoose soon as I heur 'em cry."

"But do the Indians not expect that you will discover their presence in the mountains, and report it to Fort Laramie?"

"That are jist what they does think, Boy Pard, an' will try ter prevent."

"How?"

"Yer see a dead man can't do no talkin'."

"No."

"Nor walkin'?"

"No, uncle."

"Waal, they is goin' ter kill me."

"Kill you, uncle?"

"Yas, ef they kin; but somehow I doubts ther possibility o' thar doin' so."

The youth laughed at the comical manner of the old man, and said:

"And so do I, uncle."

"Waal, as we knows they is heur thar is one thing ter be did."

"And what is that?"

"Fust an' hindmost ter find out jist whar they has put thar willage."

"Then, jist how many thar is in it, and ther way in and ther way out."

"Next, you must keep house while I strikes fer Laramie an' fetches a young army down upon 'em."

"I will do all I can, uncle."

"I know yer will, Boy Pard; but thar are one thing yer must not do."

"And what may that be?"

"Lose yer ha'r."

"I certainly do not wish to, uncle."

"Waal, it are as easy did as fallin' off a log, ef yer don't know how ter keep it on yer head."

"Now, come, Bruin, an' let us see whar these reds hev hid the'rselves."

The old hunter cautiously led the way over the mountain, not following directly the Indian trail, but making a *detour* in a direction which he knew would bring him across it again.

Understanding the nature of the country perfectly he again crossed the trail some half-dozen miles from where he had first discovered it.

Here he halted, and said:

"They is, as I thought, in the Trappers' Canyon, whar some good men got kilt some years ago, by a party of Inguns."

"It are a nice place fer a Ingun village, an' they hev good feedin'-ground fer ther ponies in a kind o' nat'ral corral, which half a dozen bucks kin guard."

"Is it far from here, uncle?"

"Jist three mile as ther crow flies, tho' we will hev to make five ter git thar."

"And you are going there?" asked Bruin, in surprise.

"Yas, fer I wishes ter take ther census o' ther inhabitants."

Just then a shot was heard back on the trail, and a deer came bounding out of a clump of timber and fell dead, not fifty feet from the large rock, near which the two hunters were standing.

Seizing the arm of his nephew Old Grizzly dragged him behind the rock out of sight, just as an Indian came bounding out of the timber toward the fallen deer.

"Ther deer are ther Ingun's meat, an' ther Ingun are my meat," muttered the old hunter, calmly.

CHAPTER XIX.

TWO SCALPS AND ONE CAPTIVE.

"Do you intend to shoot him, uncle?" asked Bruin Adams, as he saw the Indian bend over the deer, and his uncle making preparations that had a deadly look.

"No, Boy Pard, fer powder am expensive, an' it don't cost nothin' to kill with a knife.

"Now yer see thet Ingun are bendin' over thet deer jist enjoyin' ther cuttin' of it up, an' I are preparin' fer a surprise-party fer him.

"You wait heur, boy."

The old hunter grasped his knife firmly, slung his rifle across his back, and, with the noiseless tread of a panther crept upon the unsuspecting savage, who was busy preparing his game to shoulder to the village.

Nearer and nearer crept Old Grizzly, until within ten feet of the kneeling Indian, and then, with a mighty spring he was upon him.

There was a half-stifled war-cry as the knife was driven into his side, and ere he died the scalp-lock was torn from his head.

But just at that moment another warrior bounded from the timber, which Old Grizzly did not see, and threw his rifle to his shoulder.

Another moment and the days of the old hunter would have ended then and there, when from around the rock came the puff of a rifle, and at its crack the red-skin dropped dead.

Old Grizzly was on his feet in an instant, and his quick eye took in the situation at a glance, and he shouted:

"Waal did, Boy Pard, fer yer saved ther old man's ha'r thet time.

"Come an' git yer scalp."

The old man walked toward the fallen Indian as he spoke, and bent over him and raised the scalp-lock in his fingers caressingly.

Just then, however, there came a series of wild yells, the rapid rattle of revolvers, and he saw fully two-score of warriors rushing upon his Boy Pard.

Instinctively he took the scalp from the red-

skin's head and thrust it into his belt, while he slung his rifle round ready for use and started to aid his nephew.

But a glance showed that it would be madness for him to go then, as, although Bruin had dropped half a dozen red-skins with his revolvers, he was already in their grasp and being bound with a celerity that was marvelous, and seems natural to an Indian.

That the Indians had been creeping up a canyon through which Bruin was visible to them, and they had not discovered him, Old Grizzly at once saw, and like a deer he bounded to cover.

Once in the timber he ran with the speed of an antelope down the hillside, and kept up his rapid pace until he had placed a long distance between himself and his foes.

Then he sat down to rest, and having recovered his breath, began, as was his wont, to talk to himself aloud.

"Waal, they hev ther boy, an' no mistake.

"It were my fault, too, for I sh'u'd hev knowed that whar thar war so big a trail, thar must hev been some stragglin' hunters.

"I got ther deer-killer, tho', an' ther boy chipped t'other one, an' hit him squar' in ther fo'head.

"An' heur are ther scalps; but they is durned little consideration when they hev ther boy.

"My glories o' ther Rockies, how he did fight!

"They took him suddint from ther rear; but he hed out them revolvers o' his'n, an' I seen five reds drop myself, an' they didn't tumble as tho' they was lurt, but same as they was sent fer fer good an' all.

"They c'u'd hev kilt ther boy, but they didn't, an' thet says as how they wants his scalp arter they hev hed thar fun with him.

"Waal, if they wants his scalp more'n I does him, they hev got ter take it, thet's all.

"Now, as thar devil-eyes didn't see me, an' it were strange, too, for they gin'rally sees more'n kin be see'd anyhow, I will jist perambulate down to ther Trappers' Canyon, see how they likes ther camp, whar ther captive lodge are put, an' what are ther news gin'rally.

"When I sees what I wants ter see, then I kin tell what are ter be did ter reskoo ther boy, fer he's got ter be saved, or my ha'r hes got ter be lost."

So saying, Old Grizzly arose and started in the direction of the Trappers' Canyon.

CHAPTER XX.

THE CAPTIVE.

THE Indians who had discovered Bruin Adams, and rushed upon him, had been so struck with admiration at his splendid courage and the cool manner in which he handled his revolvers, dropping one of their number at

every shot, the chief called out to them to take him alive, that they might witness if he displayed the same cool mien when under torture.

Although he never failed in his aim, and five red-skins had dropped before him, they rushed pell-mell upon him, seized him in their arms, and, in spite of his powerful resistance, bore him to the earth and bound him securely.

The captors were a small hunting-party who had diverged from the line of march to carry into camp with them a quantity of game.

They were therefore delighted when they were able to enter the camp with not only quantities of game, but a white foe, though the death of their comrades, at the hands of the youth, caused wailing among the squaws and children.

The tepees were being put up as they entered, and the prisoner was led to one side of the village and securely bound to a stake, while the old hags and heartless children gathered around him and heaped insults upon him, many of them slapping his face and pulling his hair in no gentle manner.

Through an Indian guard, who did not prevent them from annoying him, Bruin found out that he would certainly be tortured in the morning, and then put to death.

But the brave youth never flinched at these tidings, and only busied his brain in plotting some means of escape.

He knew, to his joy, that Old Grizzly had escaped, and the prowess and pluck of his uncle he well knew, and did not doubt but that he was then planning some means by which to rescue him.

"I've got an awful short time of it," he muttered, as an old squaw struck him a sharp blow on the face.

Just then his eyes fell upon a face in the crowd that riveted his attention.

It was the face of a young girl, and evidently one that had Indian blood in her veins; but that she was not a full-blood red-skin was also evident.

Her form was slender, willowy in its motion, and her hands and feet were remarkably small.

Her complexion was hardly darker than a Spaniard's, clear and healthy in hue, and her hair was waving, dark brown, and very long.

She was attired in the finest of dressed buckskins, moccasins, leggings and hunting-shirt, all beaded and wrought with porcupine quills, while necklaces of gold and silver were around her neck, and bracelets of the same precious metals upon her arms, around her wrists and above her elbows.

In her belt she carried a small knife and pistol, and upon her head wore a beautiful coronet of eagles' feathers, gayly dyed, which showed that she was a chief's daughter.

Coming up to the youth, she gazed upon him, caught his eye, and catching him by the hair with both hands, pretended to pull it; but in doing so he heard the words in good English:

"U-noon-ca is the boy brave's friend.

"To-night she will save him."

His eyes showed her that he understood her, and with another apparently vicious pull at his hair, she turned away, and an old hag stepped up and gave him a blow in which there was no mercy.

But Bruin did not mind it half as much as he had before done, and his eyes followed the form of the young girl as she moved about among the crowd.

But gradually the day died away, and the boy captive was left alone with his three Indian guards; but with the darkness the shadows seemed to rise from his heart, for he felt faith in U-noon-ca, and knew, too, that Old Grizzly had not forgotten him.

CHAPTER XXI.

U-NOON-CA.

It was growing bedtime for the early-retiring Indians, who were very tired after their long march, when the night guards were placed around the prisoner.

There were three of them, all young warriors of promise, and with no fear of a rescue, or that the bound captive could escape, they composed themselves to rest around the stake.

Each warrior threw his buffalo robe upon the ground, and resting his mat at or upon the feet of the others, formed a triangle, in the center of which was the stake, to which Bruin was most securely bound, hands and feet, and capable of moving only his head.

The boy's heart sunk within him at this disposition of his guards, for he had expected that he would be borne to the guard tepee, not far away, and only one warrior be left outside.

As it was, he could see no manner of means by which the Indian maiden could keep her promise to rescue him.

Had it been Old Grizzly to face those sleeping Indians, he felt that the case might be different.

Still he did not give up all hope, and ere very long he saw that he was right in not doing so, for a form appeared coming through the darkness, whom he soon saw was none other than U-noon-ca, the Indian maiden.

The three young braves had not composed themselves to sleep, and arose hastily at her coming, seemingly in both surprise and pleasure.

Though Bruin did not understand what she said, he saw that she pointed back to the tepees, and heard her mention the name of the chief, Iron Eyes whose daughter she was.

That the young warriors were in love with

ber, Bruin Adams recognized at a glance, and as she pointed to him and stepped forward they made no objection.

She walked around behind him and caught hold of his hand, and he felt her drawing a ring off, which had escaped the eyes of the Indians, and which he prized most highly, as it was a present to him from the little girl whom he kept old Tartar from punishing at the country school.

"U-noon-ca has promised, and U-noon-ca's tongue is straight," whispered the maiden.

As she took the ring she held it up to the view of the warriors, and then put it on her finger with a pleased laugh.

Then she thrust her hand into the bosom of his hunting-shirt and performed a trick of sleight-of-hand that surprised the young captive greatly.

He well knew that he was wholly temperate, and did not carry a bottle of liquor with him even for "medicine." And yet U-noon-ca drew out of his hunting-shirt, apparently, a flask that certainly contained whisky.

With glad laughter she held it up to the view of the young braves, and Bruin then saw through her little game; she had brought it with her to carry out her pledge.

This she gave to one young warrior, to take a drink, and then to a second, and next to the third, and they were by no means backward in indulging in a liberal quantity.

When the flask was empty U-noon-ca claimed it, showed her ring to the young braves, once more, and with a coquettish manner went back toward the tepees.

The young warriors had all been treated alike, all smiled on, each one had been shown the ring, and so there was no cause for quarreling, and therefore they once more took to their buffalo-robies.

Bruin watched them closely, though with apparent indifference, and soon saw that the liquor had done its work, for they slept soundly.

Half an hour, which seemed an age to Bruin, then passed away, and his watching eyes detected the maiden coming quietly toward him.

With a footfall like velvet she came forward, drawing nearer and nearer, until at length she stood just outside the triangle formed by the bodies of the Indians.

For a moment she stood like a statue, her eyes falling upon each one in turn, and then, convinced that they slept soundly she drew a knife from her belt and stepped boldly, but noiselessly across the body of one.

Thus standing, she bent forward, knife in hand, and severed the bonds with her sharp knife.

Then Bruin Adams was free of his rawhide bonds and the stake; but yet he had not

crossed that fearful barrier at his feet, and even across that he had some deadly dangers to risk, as he would have to elude the guards.

Having released him, the maiden stepped back and motioned to him to follow.

He stepped forward to obey, when his benumbed feet, so long and tightly bound, refused to uphold his weight, and he fell heavily across one of the Indians.

Like the very wind U-noon-ca bounded away to avoid detection, for she saw that the captive was instantly in the grasp of the three armed warriors.

In vain his struggle, Bruin well knew, and in a second's time almost he was again bound, and was borne by two of his guards to the prison tepee, while one of them started off toward the village, and hearing upon their lips the names of U-noon-ca and Iron Eyes, the youth knew that she had been seen and recognized as his friend, and the thought of harm to her filled him with the greatest regret and sorrow.

Once in the tepee he was again securely bound, and soon after the third guard returned.

But he was not alone, for he was accompanied by the old chief, Iron Eyes, who held by the hand the Indian maiden U-noon-ca.

She was calm, and her eyes flashed fearlessly as she confessed the act of having tried to save the captive, for the gestures of the Indians showed Bruin what they were talking about.

Then the old Iron Eyes turned away, leading the maiden with him, and the young captive was left to his own bitter thoughts and under the care of the now wide-awake guards.

But confident now that U-noon-ca could no longer aid the pale-face captive, and feeling still the fumes of the liquor, the warriors again settled themselves for a sleep, and Bruin felt that all hope was gone, for how could Old Grizzly ever enter the Indian village and save him against such fearful odds?

CHAPTER XXII.

OLD GRIZZLY'S PLOT.

THE result of the view Old Grizzly obtained of the Indian village was by no means satisfactory to him.

He saw that his conjecture was right that a village had been brought to the mountains to hide while the warriors and ponies recuperated and laid plans for some devilish work against the settlers.

They had camped in a narrow valley, which was known to a few hunters as the Trappers' Canyon, and through the center of it ran a shallow stream.

The tepees were already up, and were on the banks of the stream, and their number proved to the old hunter that fully four hundred warriors could be brought into the field.

Below the village the canyon widened into

a valley with the same precipitous sides, and, being fertile in the extreme and well-watered, it was a most desirable pasturage for the ponies, which were spread over the level grounds, over a thousand in number.

As the valley, two miles below, again narrowed to a canyon, the pass was certainly a most desirable place for an Indian village, as they could be attacked at only two points, and if an enemy was expected, a few red-skin warriors could defend the entrance against twenty times their number.

The old hunter had been through the canyon often before, and knew its good points; but as he sat on the hillside two miles away, he gazed upon the village, the feeding ponies, and all other objects that attracted his attention, with an interest that was most earnest.

"Thar are ther council-lodge, an' that tepee by itself on t'other side be ther captive prison, an' they hev ther boy in thar now, fer I see two red-skins standin' guard over it.

"Waal, I'd hev to be a reg'lar out an' outer Injun ter git in thar, so ther sneak game are no good.

"Afore I c'u'd go ter the fort, an' them sogers gits heur, ther boy w'u'd be torter'd an' kilt, fer them officers hes ter move by rule an' 'rithmetic, sarcumlocution an' trumpet-blow in', in all ondertakin's 'ceptin' when they is calt on ter git suddint, an' then they fergits disciplin' an' they gits, as I hes seen.

"Waal, what are ter be did ter save ther boy?

"He hev got ter be saved, that are a fact, but how are it ter be did?"

For a long time the old hunter lay under the shelter of the tree that concealed him, and was lost in deep thought.

Then suddenly his face lighted up, and he backed away over the ridge, shouldered his rifle and started at an Indian trot for his own camp in the rocks.

It was just sunset when he reached there, and at once he set to work to arrange the plan of rescue he had formed.

Going up to the bears he began to unchain them and fasten them together two by two.

Next followed the wolves, then the panthers, next the wild-cats and foxes, and then he surveyed the savage band, his stout stick keeping them in awe, for not one of them was there that he had not thoroughly trained.

"I may lose some o' yer varmint's this night of our Lord Anna Dominy; but ther boy are more related ter me than ther rest of you critters, tho' yer is all o' ther same fambly.

"I knows yer c'u'd chaw nails, yer is so hungry; but yer is allus hungry fer eatin', no matter ef yer has jist eated a buffler.

"Now, I wants no fightin', no grumblin', on'y Sunday-school conduct among ye, varmint's, or I'll hit yer snoots a knock with my

behavin'-pole," and Old Grizzly shook his stick at his pets.

"Come, Calamity, you is invited, and come along all of ye."

He unfastened the large grizzly as he spoke, and taking the chain in his hand, started through the tunnel.

Silently the savage procession followed, the rattle of the chains making the only sound, for their footfalls were not heard.

Out of the passageway through the hill of rock they went, down the mountain-side, close at the heels of the brute tamer.

Occasionally a deer would bound by in the darkness, and the wolves would show an inclination to give chase, and the bears and panthers would growl; but a few raps of Old Grizzly's magic wand quieted the disturbance, and again the procession wended onward.

At last Old Grizzly halted, and letting go of the grizzly's chain thus addressed his pets:

"Look heur now all of ye; I hes ter leave yer fer a short tarm, but I wants ther best behavior I kin git out o' ye.

"My namesake heur will kcep a eye on yer, an' Calamity, you come arter me ef I is needed.

"Jist be good all claws around, an' I'll give yer a cirkus an' fat feedin' fer animiles in return."

Leaving his dog Calamity, and the huge grizzly bear as monitors, the old hunter stole softly away upon some secret mission.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A NOVEL RESCUE.

FOR several hundred yards, after leaving his brute soldiers, the old hunter went cautiously along, until at last he came in view of a high cliff.

"Thet are ther openin' an' thar are ther guards," he muttered.

Throwing himself upon the ground he crawled like a snake nearer to the cliff, and soon caught sight of a spark.

"Thet are ther guard smokin' his pipe, an' I hopes he enjoys it, fer it are ther last on 'arth he'll hev.

"Now ter see how many varmint's thar be."

So saying he crept nearer and nearer until he saw an Indian warrior seated at the entrance to the canyon, while his pony was lariatd not far away.

"I'm guessin' he are alone, an' so heur goes.

"Ef thar be others I hes ter rastie it out, an' ef I calls, ther sogers I hes back yonder will come fer all they is wurth."

Keeping in the shadow of some scrub pines Old Grizzly got within ten paces of the Indian guard.

Then he raised a bow he had brought with him, and fitting to the string a flint-headed arrow took deliberate aim.

The arrow left the bow with a slight twang, and aimed just above the spark that showed the bowl of the pipe, buried itself in the throat of the Indian, who, without a groan, sunk back against the cliff, dead.

Cautiously Old Grizzly then left his place of concealment, and approached the dead red-skin, and with an air of satisfaction removed his scalp.

Hardly had he done so when he espied two ponies, which told him as many more guards were near.

The next moment he heard voices and steps approaching, and two warriors appeared coming out of the canyon.

Down upon the body of the red-skin squatted Old Grizzly, and quietly waited for their approach, an arrow fitted in the bow and held ready, for he dared not fire a pistol then and alarm the village, not half a mile distant.

The two warriors each carried a blanket full of pine straw, they had gathered in the mountain side, to make themselves comfortable, and they were within six feet of Old Grizzly when he let the arrow fly, straight for the heart of one, while, with the bound of a panther he was upon the other, his hand at his throat, and his knife was cutting its way into the heart of the red-skin.

"Thet were done slick an' prime," said Old Grizzly, as the savage slipped through his hands to the ground, and lay dead by the side of his comrade.

"But I must get this wittals away from heur afore I fetches my sogers, or ther cirkus will begin afore I is ready, as them critters does love Injun-meat, an' they'd go fer it hot an' heavy."

One by one he shouldered the dead Indians and bore them up the hillside, away from the mouth of the canyon.

Then he hastily ran back to where he had left his pte.

They were all squatted, or lying upon the ground, and greeted him with low growls and whines, which he quickly silenced by a stern word and an exhibition of his stick.

"Come along, yer varmints, fer time are preshus, an' I is sp'ilin' fer ther fun.

"Lordy hev marcy, but it will be ther durndest, dog-gondest rumpus thet ever were seen in a Christian commoonity."

At the thought of the plot he had formed, Old Grizzly chuckled as he went along, closely followed by the brutes.

As they sniffed the blood of the three Indians, at the mouth of the canyon, there was a halt, and some angry growls; but the stick fell heavily, and dancing about among the beasts, the old Bear Tamer soon restored perfect order, and the column moved into the canyon.

At last they came in sight of the smoldering camp-fires of the village.

All was silent, excepting the barking of a dog now and then.

"Ther dogs will be skeert too.

"Ahl but this are a picnic. I is sorry I hes nobody ter invite ter it.

"Now, varmints, yer every durned one knows me an' my call, an' I 'spects yer ter obey me.

"I goes straight ter ther prison tepee, halts thar a leetle minute, an' then passes on down ther valley, stampedin' ther ponies, an' so on round home.

"Ther roll are called, twenty-nine b'ars, fourteen wolfs, ten pa'nters, sixteen wild-cats, twelve foxes, one dog an' one man.

"Ef any o' yer stop ter chaw Ingun-meat, yer will lose yer life, so don't tarry among ther wickid Inguns, but come right on arter yer vartuous marster.

"Howl like camp-meetin,' snap, bite an' claw like ther devil, but keep a-goin' all ther time.

"Now, sogers, yer hes yer orders, an' in a second I will give yer ther toot ter go."

The dumb soldiers, as Old Grizzly called his band, listened patiently to this harangue and got ready for the work, which they knew was out of the usual routine, as the Bear Tamer had never taken his whole "fambly" out for a walk.

Drawing his revolver in both hands, and having also in his belt a spare pair which Bruin had brought, besides his own double-barrel pistols, Old Grizzly moved silently toward the quiet village, that little dreamed of danger.

With one loud, ringing yell, answered by howls, growls, yelps, shrieks and barks from the brutes, Old Grizzly bounded forward.

The whole pack at his heels, he headed directly for the prison tepee, and it seemed as if the ark had suddenly landed and the animals were escaping.

What the terrified Indians thought will never be known; but when they dashed out to meet a foe, and saw that wild, swaying, howling, growling torrent pouring through their village they fled in terror to the hillsides.

With shrieks squaws seized their papposes and fled, and amid the uproar was heard that wild cry one moment, the blast of a horn—Old Grizzly's signal—the next, followed by the rattle of the revolvers, whenever the old hunter saw a warrior upon whom he turn his fire.

Straight to the prison tepee went the surging mass, and the guards fled in terror, and bounding in Old Grizzly severed the rawhide thongs that bound Bruin, and thrust his belt of arms, which hung on the lodge-pole, into his hands.

"Is yer wounded, boy?"

"No, uncle; but what in thunder is the row?" cried the surprised youth.

"A menagerie bu'sted, an' a free cirkus fer

nothin', with ther animiles a-raisin' hell-Columby an' more fun a-boilin'," shrieked Old Grizzly, as he dragged the youth from the tepee and darted on down the canyon, followed by the howling brutes.

Not an Indian could be seen, for all had fled to the hills, or climbed trees, with the earnest desire that they could pull them up after them.

Down the valley they swept, stampeding the ponies, who ran over the guards at the other end of the canyon, and then round the mountain base they went, back to the rocky den in the cliff, where they arrived tired out and panting.

"Waal, I'll be durned ef them Injuns hain't skeert nigh ter death; hooray fer my animiles, from b'ar ter pole-cat, of which I hev one tender specimen.

"Let me see, thar is only three b'ars, two pant'ers, three wolfs, four cats, one bein' thet same pole-kitty, an' seven foxes gone, them last critters hevin' takin' advantage o' ther cirkus ter git, bein' sly kind o' animiles.

"Waal, Boy Pard, you is *rescoud*, an' durn ther expense.

"Give us yer grip, fer I see yer is anxshus ter take ther ole man's han'."

CHAPTER XXIV.

BRUIN ADAMS ON THE WAR PATH.

THAT his uncle had saved his life, Bruin Adams well knew, and he felt the deepest gratitude to him for it, though he could not restrain from laughter when he recalled the wild scenes of the rescue.

The Indians had intended torturing him the following day, he learned through one of his guards who spoke English, so Old Grizzly had not acted too soon in his rescue.

"They did not see you, strange to say, uncle, and I gave them to understand that I was alone in the mountains, and that I had killed and scalped the two warriors; but as I could not show the scalps they did not believe me.

"What do you think they will do now?"

"Lay low ontill mornin', waitin' ter see ef thar are goin' ter be another shower o' wild animiles, an' then set out ter find whar they come from an' what hed happened.

"I kilt a few with my shooters, an' I saw ther b'ars get a grip on several, while a papoose or two mout hev got hurted or kilt, so thar will be mournin' in ther village in ther mornin'.

"But they'll send out scouts, an' as all my animiles as is comin' in will hev arrove, they won't know what hes been ter pay."

"I didn't see any of the animals killed."

"Thar warn't one hurted, I'm a-thinkin', so they might hev got cotched by the chains round trees.

"As ther Injun ponies is stampeded, they

can't move right off, an' ef they does thar's but one way fer 'em to go, so I wants yer ter strike fer Laramie, Boy Pard."

"I am ready, uncle."

"I'll put yer on ther right track, and shove yer critter hard.

"Tell ther kernul thar are four hundred warriors, under Iron Eyes, an or'nery devil, as he knows, an' lead them by ther Devil's Pass, whar we was some days ago.

"I will be thar ter meet yer, an' tell yer jist whar ther Injins is, an' what they is a-doin'."

"I'll start at once, uncle."

"Yas, an' don't spare yer critter, fer thar be more at ther fort."

Ten minutes after Bruin Adams was in the saddle, and his horse being perfectly fresh, he rode along at a rapid pace.

He was a good woodsman, and readily understood his bearings, and almost as straight as Old Grizzly could have done, he laid his course for Laramie.

It was just noon when he dashed into the fort, his horse reeking with foam and panting like a tired hound.

Instantly he was shown into the quarters of the commandant and made known his errand.

"I never neglect a message from Old Grizzly Adams, young man, so I will lead two hundred troopers against old Iron Eyes within the hour.

"But you will be unable to return."

"Oh, no, colonel, if I can get a fresh horse, I care not for the fatigue," was the youth's answer.

The colonel ordered dinner for Bruin, and listened to his story of Old Grizzly's rescue of him with great amusement, and congratulated him upon his escape.

Two hours after Bruin entered the fort he left it by the side of the colonel, as guide of the expedition.

Mounted upon a fresh horse, he forced the pace, and just at midnight arrived at the Devil's Pass, having unfalteringly led the command there, and won the admiration of the colonel.

True to his word, Old Grizzly was there to meet them.

"How is yer, colonel, an' ther fambly I hopes is well?" said the old hunter, as calmly as though there was no important work on hand.

"Quite well, I thank you, Grizzly; how is your family?"

"Prime, tho' thar do be a few missin' sin' ther rackit o' last night.

"I s'pose yer hes comed on ther trail o' them cussed Inguns?"

"Yes; are they still in the valley, Adams?"

"They be, an' powerful skeert too, fer ther bucks hain't got up all ther ponies yit, an'

they passed a oneasy night, fearin' another 'arthquake o' animiles."

The colonel and his officers all laughed, for every man had heard the strange story of how Old Grizzly had rescued his nephew.

"Well, it would be a good time to give them another surprise now."

"No, kernul, not ontill daybreak, just, then we can dash in on 'em, an' see whar they hides."

"I w'u'd send half ther regiment, with my Boy Pard thar, to ther upper eend o' ther canyon, an' I'll lead ther rest o' yer to t'other eend, an' jist at daybreak we kin sail in onto 'em, an' ther fight will be prime."

This plan of Old Grizzly's was decided upon, and the colonel himself, with a hundred men, went under Bruin Adams's guidance to the upper end of the canyon.

Owing to the death of the three guards the night before, the Indians had an advance picket out from the mouth of the canyon, and a score of warriors at the spot where Old Grizzly had slain the three red-skins.

This the old hunter had discovered, and he had told Bruin how he could flank the narrow entrance, and attack the guards from the rear, at the same time the troopers charged from the front.

Putting the command in position, and telling the colonel the exact locality of the picket and canyon entrance, Bruin dismounted, and with twenty cavalrymen on foot, went cautiously through the woods.

CHAPTER XXV.

BRUIN'S LUCK.

BACK from the canyon's entrance a couple of hundred yards grew a tall pine, the branches of which rested upon the cliff above.

Going to this part of the ridge, and leaping it undiscovered, Bruin fastened together a number of picket-ropes he had brought with him, and tying one end securely around a stout limb, dropped the other to the ground.

"Now, boys, we will have to slide down," he said in a whisper, and instantly swung himself upon the rope.

Downward he went, hand under hand, and soon the men felt the rope slacken, and knew that he had safely landed in the darkness below.

One by one the others followed, and soon all were on *terra firma* in the canyon, excepting one, who returned to report that the party had flanked the Indian guards in safety.

Impatiently they waited for the signal of attack, and the minutes dragged slowly away to them.

At last the skies above them began to lighten a little, and just then came the notes of a bugle ringing down the canyon.

Cheers and clattering hoofs followed, and then a volley from the advance picket, and

loud orders from the chief in command of the reserve force, while a mounted warrior came dashing down the canyon to arouse the village and summon more braves.

One shot from Bruin's revolver, and the savage fell dead from his horse.

"Now, boys, it is our time—forward!" cried Bruin Adams in ringing tones, and as the warrior band in the canyon's entrance saw that they were between two fires, and that all was lost, they fought with the desperation of despair, but were soon overpowered, as the youth and his dismounted men dashed in upon them in a hand-to-hand conflict, and the fight was won when the colonel and his troopers drew rein in the canyon.

Mounting his horse, which a soldier was leading, Bruin then led the command down upon the village, just as the shots at the other end of the valley told that Old Grizzly and his party had attacked the guards.

Over the village, and through it swept the soldiers, carrying all before them, and, the two forces uniting, the fight was of short duration, but fierce while it lasted.

All through the battle Bruin Adams had one idea in his mind, and that was to find the maiden, U-noon-ca, who had been caught in her attempt to rescue him.

He soon saw the tepee of the old chief, which was larger than the others, and standing a little off to itself, in a clump of trees.

Toward this he bounded, calling to several soldiers who were near to follow him.

But they had their hands full with the fighting warriors, or did not hear his call, and he dashed up to the tepee alone.

All the occupants had fled, he thought, as all was silent within, while the chief he knew was off at the head of his braves, trying to save his village.

Dashing aside the buffalo curtain hanging over the entrance, Bruin looked within.

All was darkness, but, as a camp-fire was burning near, he took his knife and slashed in the skin covering of the tepee and the light penetrated within.

There, upon a bear-skin couch he beheld a form, and springing forward he discovered that it was U-noon-ca.

But, as he recognized her a cry of horror broke from his lips, for he beheld, buried in her bosom, a long-bladed knife.

She was dead, and seemed only asleep.

He touched her hand and found it cold, and the pulse had ceased to beat.

Then he knew that U-noon-ca had been killed for her treachery in trying to save him, and he swore to avenge her.

Dashing from the tepee he again joined in the battle, and his reckless courage rendered him the cynosure of all eyes, and won the cheers of the troopers wherever he went, until

the red fight was over, and the soldiers were victorious.

Whipped unmercifully, his tepees in flames, his women and children flying in terror to the thickets, and many of his warriors slain, while his ponies that had been driven back were already in the enemy's hands, old Iron Eyes was glad to accept terms, and he marched off under guard to the Reservation he had secretly left, to go upon the war-path.

CONCLUSION.

WHEN the battle was ended one of the first duties of Bruin Adams was to seek the tepee of old Iron Eyes and wrap the body of poor U-noon-ca in an army blanket and have a grave dug for its reception.

To the colonel and Old Grizzly he told what the girl had done for him, and that she had suffered death therefor, and the old hunter said:

"I hes know'd ther gal ever sin' she were a leetle pappoose, an' I hes allus liked her.

"Yer see, her mammy were not a squaw, but a white woman, taken prisoner by Iron Eyes, and whom he made his wife, but who died after a couple o' years' living among Injuns, as I'd think any 'oman mout.

"Ther gal's white blood made her squar' clean through, an' she showed it in helpin' you, Boy Pard, an' I is durned sorry she hev been kilt, an' some day I may git even on her account."

"The girl did nobly by you, Bruin, and she shall have burial by the chaplain," said the colonel, and, the chaplain having been summoned, the soldiers were called to arms, and

all stood with hats off around the lonely grave, while poor U-noon-ca was lowered into it, to be ever hidden from human eye.

After the burial the colonel stepped up to Bruin Adams, and complimented him before the entire command for his splendid courage, and ended by offering him the position of a special Government scout at the fort.

This honor young Bruin was only too willing to accept, for he had ambition to rise above a common hunter of the border, and he was urged to it by his uncle, Old Grizzly, who said to him in his quaint way:

"Take ther commish o' scout, Boy Pard, and make a man o' yerse'f one o' these days.

"Yer hes it in yer, fer yer is grit an' goodwill clean through, fer it runs in ther blood o' ther Adamses.

"As fer me, I are only a old b'ar tamer, an never will be anything else ter ther days o' kingdom come.

"But you are han'some as a gal an' brave as my old grizzly b'ar at the door, an' yer kin rank up to be a cap'n, or a gin'ral, maybe, an' marry some sweet critter ter take back with yer ter ther old home on Seneca Lake.

"Go, Boy Pard, with ther kernel, fer he are a squar' man, an' in yer scoutin' round drop in an' see yer old uncle Grizzly Adams, fer yer will be ever welcome, an' he won't forget yer."

Thus urged, Bruin Adams accepted the offer of the colonel, and several days after left the rocky ranch of his uncle and took up his abode at the fort, where his daring deeds as scout, guide and Indian-fighter are still told around the border camp-fires.

THE END.

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